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NATIONAL REVIEW

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A Conservative Strategy on Global Warming

JIM MANZI

PLUS:

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Khaled Abu Toameh on the Gaza Strip

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NATIONAL REVIEW

JUNE 25, 2007 VOL. LIX, NO. 11

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■ COVER STORY

Game Plan

It is no longer possible, scientifically or politically, to deny that human activities have very likely increased global temperatures; what remains in dispute is the precise magnitude of the human impact. Conservatives should accept this reality—and move on to the question of what we should do about it. This would put us in a much better position to prevent a massive, counterproductive intervention in the U.S. economy. *By Jim Manzi*

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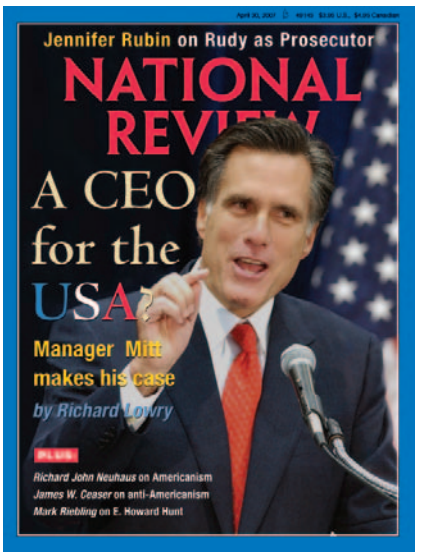
letters to the editor

UNMANAGEABLE

In the cover piece of April 30 ("A CEO for the USA?"), Richard Lowry calls Mitt Romney a proficient manager and CEO. That is precisely what worries informed conservatives. Management expertise is not what America needs from a president, particularly in a time of moral and social crisis and of sweeping cultural change. Management is what a good professional staff is supposed to provide; leadership is something else entirely, and we would not want to conflate management with the higher virtue of leadership. America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A CEO for the USA?
Manager Mitt makes his case
by Richard Lowry
PLUS
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James W. Ceaser on anti-Americanism
Mark Riebling on E. Howard Hunt

needs leadership based on an inflexibly constitutionalist and minimum-government worldview.

Throughout his political career, Romney has valued mere management over the substance of what he has managed. His chief contribution as governor of Massachusetts was his bungling of the gay-marriage issue. Professor of jurisprudence Hadley Arkes was quite correct when he described on NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE how Romney managed the crisis as a weak-kneed political pragmatist.

The facts are not seriously disputed: Romney ignored emphatic legal advice from numerous authoritative sources that he was constitutionally obliged to ignore the *Goodridge* decision, which neither sought nor anticipated any action whatever from the executive branch unless the legislature first acted to legalize homosexual marriage—the sole avenue to legalization that the state constitution allows. Romney wrongly claimed that the state supreme court had itself changed the law, thus imputing power to Massachusetts judges that the state constitution explicitly denies them—a power the Massachusetts courts have repeatedly admitted they do not have.

Romney is unrecognizable as a conservative, as a constitutionalist, or as anything but a managerialist.

John Haskins
Parents' Rights Coalition
Waltham, Mass.
et alia

MITT'S MITTS

Thank you for your April 30 cover photo. It helped narrow the field for my primary vote. That little pointing-with-the-fingertip gesture of Mitt Romney's disqualifies him, in my book, as just another phony politician. Why do so many pols emphasize their ideas with a fifth of a finger? Bill Clinton's gesture was even worse, his insinuating thumb peeking over the top of his fist. A real man knows how to make a fist, and an authentic person points the way with confidence. I suppose Mitt could just be over-schooled in PC gesturing, but how desirable is that?

Carl Radon
Grand Rapids, Ohio

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THE WEEK

■ President Bush says critics of the immigration bill haven't read it. Just imagine how angry they'll be when they do.

■ Fred Thompson got a step closer to entering the presidential primaries by forming an "exploratory committee." He has ardent fans—the polls have him in the top tier of the race he has not even entered—but there are off-the-record scoffers in the other Republican campaigns. They say his first day in the race will be his best; that his major strength is not having bored everyone by campaigning over the last year. That is a mistake. Thompson has the most consistently conservative record of any of the top candidates; he is a serious man with well-thought-through positions; and he has a knack for presenting conservative philosophy as simple common sense. His rivals would do well not to underestimate him.

■ We wouldn't have been surprised if God had struck down Rudy Giuliani at the New Hampshire GOP presidential debate for repeating the canard that pro-lifers want to throw women in jail. Instead, a passing thunderstorm merely interfered with Giuliani's mike as he was explaining his departure from the Catholic Church on the issue of abortion, prompting him to joke about receiving retribution from on high. The comeback summed up Giuliani's night: He seemed quick, at ease and in command, portraying himself—convincingly—as the no-nonsense reformer prepared to clean up Washington. McCain was strong too, defending the war and the Senate immigration bill probably as effectively as possible (although it's hard to imagine him not losing ground with GOP primary voters every time he opens his mouth on immigration). Romney was polished as always, although he didn't stand out like the other two top-tier candidates. The debate was another indication that the conventional wisdom is wrong: This isn't a weak Republican field, but quite a strong one.

■ The Democrats held a presidential debate where they argued about whether it was better to have voted to authorize the Iraq War and now abjectly apologize for the vote (Edwards); to have never voted for the war (Obama); to have voted for the war and never apologized for it, while doing everything short of that to run from the vote and "George Bush's war" (Hillary). The field has shifted so far left on the war that Sen. Joe Biden is the only candidate who voted for the Iraq supplemental-funding bill, on grounds that our troops deserve the funding while still in the field. For this he stands out as a lonely beacon of responsibility in a party concerned more with the purity of its candidates' antiwar credentials than with the policy consequences of its fever to abandon Iraq.

Jack's back (see page 16)

ROMAN GENN

■ Hillary Clinton gave a speech decrying the ownership society as the "on your own" society (and, yes, she considers that a bad thing). She blamed Bush for everything from increasing income inequality to rising gas prices. As remedies, she offered a host of government programs including universal health care, more college aid, universal pre-kindergarten, measures to encourage unionization, and investment in alternative energy. What was most striking was the tone. In a speech partly devoted to celebrating her husband's economic legacy, she had little of her (usually) free-trading husband's openness to the global economy, but instead portrayed the global free market as something to be feared and from which people need government protection. When Hillary Clinton is departing from 1990s-style centrist Clintonomics, you know it is all but dead in the neo-populist Democratic party.

■ At the recent Democratic debate, John Edwards mused, "I don't know if I know what a rich person is." This is somewhat surprising coming from a candidate who has staked his presidential aspirations on an updated version of class warfare and

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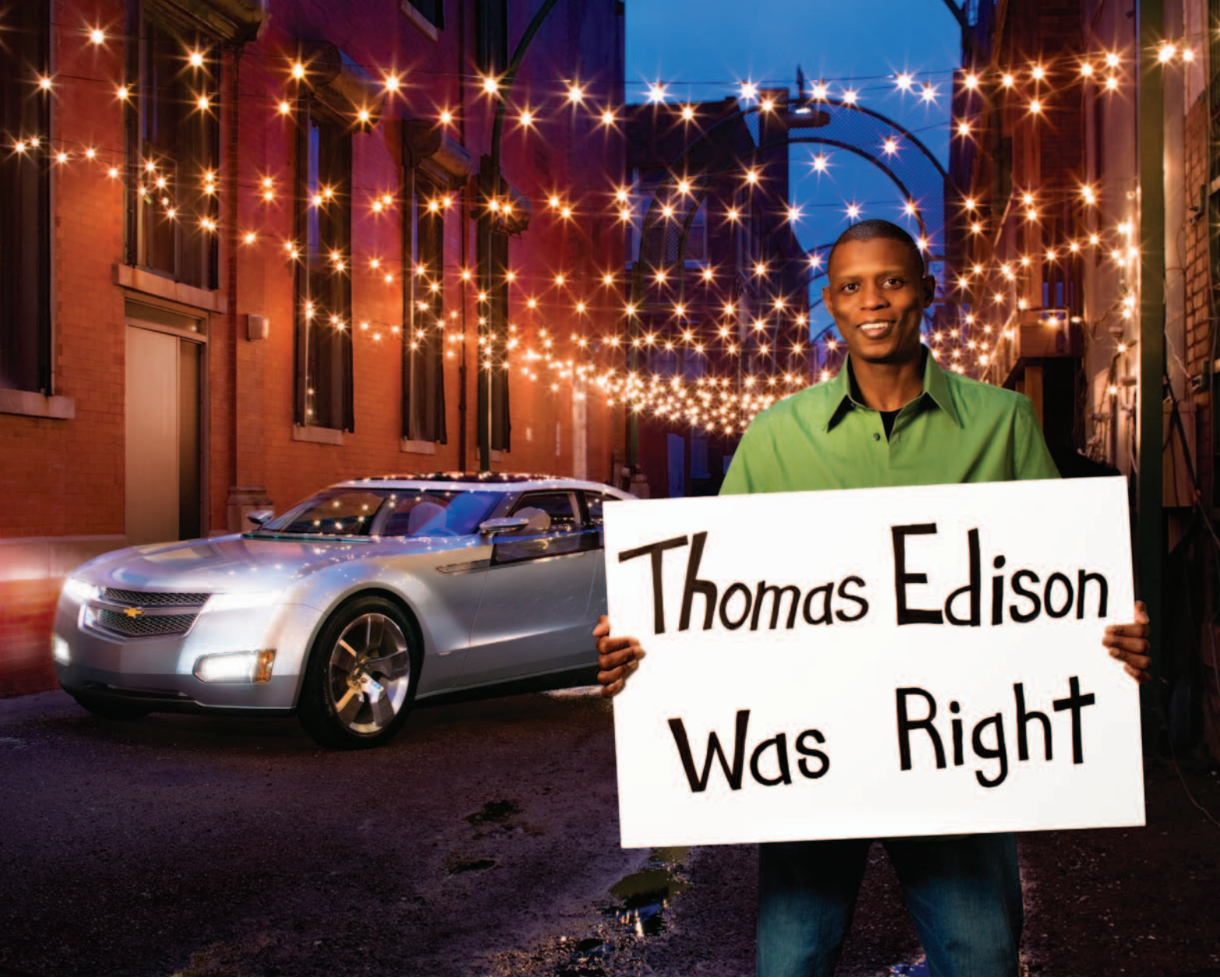

Imagine a car that plugs into an electric socket. One that uses zero gasoline and produces zero emissions. Thomas Edison imagined it, or something like it, over 100 hundred years ago. Today, I'm helping to bring it to life in GM's landmark Chevy Volt — a four passenger concept vehicle powered by GM's E-Flex propulsion system. It delivers 40 miles of pure electric driving, then a fuel efficient engine seamlessly powers up, re-charging the battery, and giving the Volt a total range of 600 miles with just a little fuel added.

It's just one part of GM's commitment to energy diversity — creating vehicles that use fuels from diverse sources, reducing our dependence on petroleum and lowering emissions. I'm part of the team in Detroit that's working on a transformation in vehicles today.

Jelani Aliyu

Jelani Aliyu

Lead Exterior Designer, Chevrolet Volt

GM

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THE WEEK...

has given speeches proclaiming that there are "two different economies in this country: one for wealthy insiders and then one for everybody else." But let's see if we can't help him out. Rich is paying $400 for a haircut. Rich is getting paid $55,000 to give a speech on . . . poverty, to a crowd of California college students. Rich is selling your 6,600-square-foot home in Georgetown for upwards of $5 million and picking up a brand-new, $6 million, 28,000-square-foot mansion in North Carolina. And rich is earning more than a half a million dollars consulting for a $30 billion hedge fund. But of course, Edwards claims he took the job to learn about poverty. Now *that's* rich.

■ Barack Obama isn't promising health care with universal coverage, just a close approximation of it, but it's not for any lack of taxes and regulations in his plan. Along with a lot of Democrats, he claims that he can pay for part of the plan by making drug companies sell medicine to Medicare on the cheap. The Congressional Budget Office finds, however, that no savings will materialize unless senior citizens' choice of medicines is restricted, which is something Obama is unwilling to advocate publicly. His plan builds on employer-provided health care. Companies that don't offer insurance would have to start offering it, or pay a tax. But we ought to be moving

DAVID MCNEW/GETTY

Critique of Pure Unreason

I WAS initially looking forward to reading Al Gore's new book, *The Assault on Reason*. But after reading an excerpt from it in *Time* magazine and catching a few of his interviews, I decided there wasn't much of a point. I thought *The Assault on Reason* was going to be something of a philosophical treatise explaining Gore's own complicated views on reason (more on those in a moment). Instead, it turns out that Gore's book is little more than an as-told-to-tale of the left-wing nutroots. Fox News is evil. Bush is a liar. Everything every Democrat ever said supporting the Iraq War is irrelevant. Because Bush is a liar. And, most important, anyone who disagrees or remembers things differently is part of the assault on reason.

This is by no means a new shtick for liberals. Indeed, for more than half a century the general liberal tactic has been to hold up a Medusa's-head version of "hateful" conservatism and then offer the light of liberalism as the only means of banishing the demon. But what's interesting is this specific focus on reason as the exclusive property of liberals. Left-wing bloggers still crow about how they are the "reality-based community," for example. *The New Republic*'s Jonathan Chait claims that liberals are "empiricists" and "fact finders" while conservatives wear dogmatic blinders. And a few years ago, Robert Reich wrote his 327th (a rough estimate) stupid book. It was called *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*. It was your typical concatenation of ad hominem and straw-man attacks, followed by seemingly reasonable and humane liberal dogma.

And that's why I was looking forward to Gore's book. Because, to my mind, Gore had established himself as America's leading liberal *critic* of reason. In *Earth in the Balance*, Gore articulates the most thoroughly postmodern critique of the Enlightenment project ever offered by a major American politician (admittedly, this isn't a crowded field). Borrowing heavily from Heidegger—though never quoting him directly—Gore waxes eloquent on the "evils" of Descartes, Francis Bacon, and others who visited upon mankind the love of pure reason and the exaltation of the "disembodied intellect." Most of all, he mimics Heidegger's hatred of technology and love of "authenticity." Modern consumer culture and technology have separated man from his natural, spiritual, and instinctual self. And this is very bad. "Our seemingly compulsive need to control the natural world . . . has driven us to the edge of disaster, for we have become so successful at controlling nature that we have lost our connection to it."

Prophet Gore tells us that the only way we can shed our evil "false-self" persona is to reconnect with our instincts and the natural world, to choose "authenticity" over the deracinating horrors of modern technology and the legacy of the Enlightenment (executive summary: Become environmental activists). Or, as Heidegger put it, "Thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries, is the stiff-necked adversary of thought."

Critics of postmodernism have argued that Heidegger's heirs misconstrued his writings to come up with personally defined truths and relativistic ideologies that mask little more than will-to-power. Judging from Al Gore's updated definition of "reason" as "whatever I say," it sounds like those critics are right.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

How the West *Really* Lost God

A new look at secularization

What secularization theory assumes is that religious belief comes ontologically first for people and that it goes on to determine or shape other things they do—including such elemental personal decisions as whether they marry and have children. Implied here is a striking, albeit widely assumed, view of how one social phenenomenon powers another: that religious believers are more likely to produce families because religious belief somehow comes first. . . . What has not been explained, but rather assumed throughout that chain of argument, is why the causal relationship between belief and practice should always run that way instead of the other, at least some of the time. . . . In brief, it is not only possible but highly plausible that many Western European Christians did not just stop having children and families because they became secular. At least some of the time, the record suggests, they also became secular because they stopped having children and families.

—Mary Eberstadt

Terrorism, the Military, and the Courts

What kind of process is due detainees?

This essay . . . is for those who live in that gulf between the centers of gravity of elite and mass opinion—those not content to give the president a free hand in a messy, unending quasi-war but also suspicious that courts can and should supervise detentions and interrogations and doubtful that such operations are, in any event, easily subjected to absolute moral rules. This is uncomfortable territory, for the slope is indeed as slippery as slopes get—and slippery, I should say, on a hill with two distinct bottoms. At one lies a government capable of torture with impunity, the very essence of tyranny. At the other lies a government incapacitated from expeditiously taking those steps necessary to protect the public from catastrophic attack. . . . In reality, however, this is the intellectual and practical territory in which wars have been won with liberty preserved.

—Benjamin Wittes

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THE WEEK...

away from employer provision to a market model of health care. Employers should scrap their health benefits and give their employees raises instead, so that they can buy their own insurance; and federal policies that keep such arrangements from being made should be eliminated. The employer-based system is the reason for most of the problems that health-care reform is supposed to solve. What's wrong with Obama's plan is that it's not radical enough.

■ We said it in March, when I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby became the only person convicted of any crime in the CIA-leak investigation, and we'll say it again now that he has been sentenced to two and a half years in prison: President Bush should pardon Libby, and do it now. There has always been solid justification for a pardon. Patrick Fitzgerald never found enough evidence to charge Libby or anyone else with violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act or the Espionage Act in the CIA-leak affair. From the beginning of his investigation, Fitzgerald knew it was not Libby who revealed CIA employee Valerie Plame's identity to columnist Robert Novak. And the discrepancies between Libby's grand-jury testimony and that of the journalists who contradicted him can be explained by differences in memory. Now we have another reason to call for a pardon: Fitzgerald's deplorable behavior in the days leading up to the sentencing. In pre-sentencing legal arguments, it became clear that Fitzgerald wanted the judge to sentence Libby, who had been found guilty of process crimes, as if he had instead been convicted of the more serious underlying (and false) allegations that formed the basis of the investigation. President Bush should end this ridiculous saga right now.

ZOELLICK: MANDEL NGAN/AFP

■ Paul Wolfowitz was an excellent—even an inspired—choice to lead the World Bank. He is principled, insightful, and willing to take on entrenched interests. But a ridiculous "scandal" forced him out, and the entrenched interests celebrated. Not for long. President Bush came back with Robert Zoellick, the former deputy secretary of state, and holder of several other important positions. Zoellick is in the Wolfowitz mold. And though this is not a season of conservative happiness with President Bush, we congratulate him on another excellent, inspired choice.

■ With the president politically weak, one might have expected climate fearmongers finally to succeed in forcing Kyoto-style emissions caps on the U.S. Bravo to Bush, then, for making an end run around the whole Kyoto process. He announced plans to convene a conference of the Big 15 greenhouse-gas emitters—including China and India, which have their own problems with Kyoto. Bush has firmly rejected hard emissions caps, arguing instead that nations should be able to set goals relative to their economic circumstances, and emphasizing the importance of transferring cleaner energy technologies to developing nations. A focus on "emissions intensity"—i.e., the amount of greenhouse gases emitted per dollar of economic growth—is something that growing economies (as compared with, oh, Europe) can live with. Indeed, the U.S. is already improving its energy efficiency at a faster rate than Europe. Even if one accepts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's mid-point prediction of a 3-degree-Celsius increase in global temperature 100 years from now, the Bush approach is far more sensible than the regulation-happy, growth-stifling path of Gore & Co.

■ "Compassionate conservatism" has not fared well as a presidential slogan. But if it is to have one lasting and worthy legacy, it would be the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Begun in 2003, the program made America into the global leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS overnight. One billion dollars was devoted to prevention and treatment on the global epidemic during Bill Clinton's last year in office. Bush has raised that sum to $3 billion annually, and that figure will double if a proposal announced recently by Bush is enacted. Already, 1.1 million HIV-positive people, mostly from Africa and the Caribbean, have received treatment; many of those were saved from a horrible death not widely seen in America since the early '90s. And more important for the long run, prevention programs are working: Africa's rate of HIV infection peaked around 2000, and is now decreasing more quickly than ever before. Of course, George W. Bush will not receive the credit he deserves for leading on this issue from the public-health and foreign-aid lobbies. They deplore him in spite of the lives saved.

■ The reason the Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce is not to enable it to intrude into every nook and cranny of our national life, as modern jurisprudence holds, but rather to keep state governments from interfering with that commerce. States' regulation of the insurance industry has become a powerful hindrance to interstate com-

OBAMA'S SUGGESTION

It's not a sunburst, quite.
He says he saw the light
Like Hillary back when
She claimed the strength of ten—
Then laid an egg. Barack,
Devoid of writer's block,
Corns, and/or diarrhea,
Pushes Hill's panacea.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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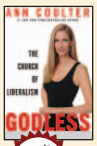

Godless: The Church of Liberalism—Following a string of #1 bestsellers, Ann Coulter has upped the ante once again. In *Godless: The Church of Liberalism* she fearlessly takes liberals to task for their hostility toward traditional religion. And she reveals how Liberals' devotion to Darwinism has nothing to do with evolution's scientific validity and everything to do with their refusal to admit the possibility of God as a guiding force.

Item #c6918 • Retail ~~$27.95~~ $1

America: The Last Best Hope, Volume II—In *America: The Last Best Hope, Volume II*, William J. Bennett confronts the America-hating historians whose works liberals have imported into our schools and universities by the truck-load. Picking up where *America: The Last Best Hope, Volume I* left off, this new book is a lively and patriotic account of the tumultuous decades that saw America become a world power, face down Nazi and Communist tyranny, and stand today against the global Islamic jihad.

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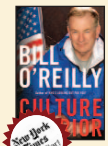

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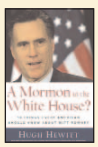

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THE WEEK...

merce: Companies have to deal with a welter of state rules; life-insurance policies sometimes have to be changed if the policy-holder moves. One solution to the problem is to allow companies that do business in multiple states to choose to be regulated by the federal government instead of the states. The existence of a choice will generate competition, thus restraining any regulators from going too far. Sens. John Sununu and Tim Johnson, a Republican and a Democrat respectively, have introduced legislation to create this federal option. Some small insurers dislike the bill because they are cozy with their state regulators and do not want to have to compete with national companies. To our mind, that's an argument for the bill, not against it.

■ In 1998, Lilly Ledbetter filed a pay-discrimination claim that was based largely on workplace events that occurred in the early 1980s. Federal statute requires that such claims be filed in a more timely manner. Five justices of the Supreme Court therefore ruled that Ledbetter had missed the deadline. The press has lauded Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissent, calling the ruling "harsh and rigid." But if the result really is harsh and rigid—and we think there is an excellent case for setting a time limit on these suits—then the problem is the statute, not the Court's clearly correct application of it. Ginsburg's dissent called on Congress to change the law. Her message: If you can't get the legislation you want through the courts, you might try the legislature.

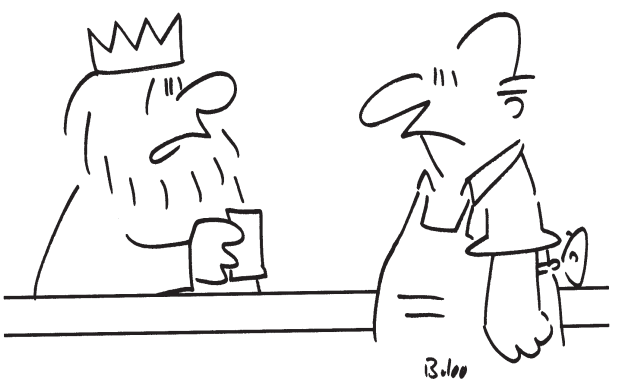
■ The Justice Department is suing New York City's Fire Department. The department is supposedly discriminating against blacks and Hispanics by requiring applicants to pass tests of reasoning and reading ability. The theory seems to be that fighting fires doesn't require thinking, any more than filing frivolous civil-rights claims does. When 343 members of the NYFD died responding to 9/11, we didn't ask for a racial breakdown. Neither should the Justice Department.

■ Four Islamists from Trinidad and Guyana, one of them a naturalized American citizen, planned to blow up fuel-storage tanks at Kennedy Airport in New York City, and the underground fuel line that supplies them, causing, they hoped, mayhem in Queens and a body blow to the airline industry. Police commissioner Ray Kelly, whose cops worked well together with the FBI to unravel the plot, reminded us that, even though five and a half years have passed since 9/11 without a similar attack in this country, we must still "look at the world through the prism of 9/11." That is true, as far as it goes. But we must also fashion a prism for 9/12, and every subsequent day, according to which we mock and humiliate the warped thought that animates these murderers, and seek to isolate and neuter the rich, crazy countries—some openly hostile, some not—that fund it. Which candidate in 2008, or 2012 for that matter, is most likely to ponder that?

■ Occasionally one encounters evil so insensate, so black, that it bears down on one's soul with an almost physical weight. So it was, we suspect, for many people who saw the torture manual prepared by al-Qaeda in Iraq and obtained by U.S. forces. One drawing shows how to put a drill through a man's hand. Another shows how to chop off his forearm with a meat cleaver. There are blowtorches to the skin, hot irons to the chest, knives to the eyeball. If waterboarding is torture, what is this? Where is the *New York Times* of the jihadists, and why are their editorialists not denouncing it? We can debate semantics all we wish. What cannot be debated is that our enemy inhabits a moral universe that has no point of overlap with our own. Remember that, next time you hear self-styled sophisticates wondering who the real terrorists are.

■ The words "Iran" and "hostage" evoke memories of 1979, but in truth the Khomeinists are still kidnapping minions of the Great Satan. In recent weeks, four American citizens have been arrested by Iranian authorities for "spying," and a fifth has disappeared as well. None is a spy, needless to say; all were in Iran on private business. This is an obvious pattern of aggression against the U.S.—but you'd never know it from the relative silence of Washington officialdom. Probably the Bush administration fears sabotaging the delicate (and pointless) diplomacy underway over Iran's nuclear program. Speaking of: The latest report from the International Atomic Energy Agency tells us that Iran now has 1,312 centrifuges enriching uranium. A month from now it could have 3,000, enough to produce one atomic bomb per year. Time and again, Iran's provocations have not met with the slightest consequence. How much more will it take for Bush to move beyond an Iran strategy that starts and ends at Turtle Bay?

■ The Foundation for Democracy in Iran has put photos on the Internet, depicting life—or rather, death—in Tehran today. Some of the stormtroopers of the Islamist revolution were photographed descending on Molavi Street in the city district of Sarsabel, where in full public view they set about murdering 23 people. The victims, male and female, were alleged to be prostitutes, homosexuals, drug addicts, pornographers, and vendors of alcohol. One of these unfortunates is shown being strangled with an Iranian device for washing after defecation. No trial, no defense, no possible appeal: This is a re-run of Berlin in 1938. The FDI also says that the mainstream media



"My mother-in-law just started enriching uranium!"

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have not commented on the photos, which is almost as sickening as the brutality itself.

■ Washington has plans to deploy interceptor missiles in Poland, and to build a radar station in the Czech Republic, as it happens on a site that once was an advanced Soviet base. The missiles are defensive, with the sole capacity of destroying incoming missiles, supposedly at some future date from rogue states such as North Korea or Iran. President Vladimir Putin has reacted with rage. Should these missiles ever be in place, he blusters, then Russia once again will aim its nuclear weapons at the capitals of Europe. To underline the point, Russia simultaneously tested a new intercontinental ballistic missile, which can be armed with ten warheads. Responding to Putin, the State Department spokesman said, "I don't know quite what to make of it." We can help this poor man. Putin aims to recover the superpower status once enjoyed by the Soviet Union. He believes the way to do this is to intimidate the countries of Europe so that they will split away from the United States. There's more to it than Cold War nostalgia, though. According to the constitution, Putin has to leave office next year, but his brand of upgraded Sovietized nationalism is proving really popular, and he's in the process of discovering whether this is enough to allow him to extend his stay in the Kremlin.

■ President Bush announced that the U.S. was imposing new unilateral sanctions on 31 Sudanese businesses. The sanctions are meant to punish Sudan for the atrocities in Darfur, where government-backed forces continue to prosecute a genocide. The sanctions will likely do little to stop that genocide, as Sudan's commercial ties to the U.S. were minimal to begin with. It is China, a major importer of Sudanese oil, that holds the important cards here. It has blocked efforts at the U.N. to impose effective sanctions on Sudan, and has continued to sell arms to Khartoum for good measure. China shares blame for many deaths—but neither it nor the world much cares.

■ Before Hugo Chávez shut it down on May 27, Radio Caracas Television was one of Venezuela's few avenues for expressing dissatisfaction with the left-wing strongman. He apparently forgot that television is an opiate of the masses—not only did RCTV broadcast news programs that made Chávez uncomfortable, it also hosted popular soap operas and comedy shows. Since it went off the air, thousands of university students have taken to the streets in protest, suggesting that perhaps in the wake of spouting anti-American rhetoric, confiscating private oil fields, and harassing landowners, Chávez finally has overreached. Unfortunately, voters won't have a chance to react at the ballot box until their country's next presidential election, which is scheduled for 2012. That's assuming Chávez doesn't cancel it.

■ Beheading is an old practice, performed by all the best people. On June 1, Pope Benedict XVI approved recognition of martyrdom for an Austrian who was beheaded by the Nazis. (The man, Franz Jaegerstaetter, had refused to serve in Hitler's army.) On the same day, we got the latest news out of Gaza: A Qaedist group vowed to behead female TV broadcasters if they do not wear strict Islamic dress. "We will cut their throats from vein to vein," said the group, following in the footsteps of its illustrious forebears.

■ Syrian president Basher Assad won a second seven-year term in office, by winning 97 percent of the vote in last month's referendum. Assad's margin equaled his 97 percent sweep in 2000. "Assad kept his base," said *U.S. News & World Report* analyst Michael Barone. "The Syrian electorate likes what it knows," admitted consultant Dick Morris, who had predicted a finish in the lower nineties, "and evidently it knows what it likes." Interior minister Bassam Abdul-Majid, announcing the returns, said that Assad's cabinet would stay on, a great relief no doubt to them (you don't want to be fired from the Syrian cabinet).

■ Laughter has so far been a sadly neglected weapon in the War on Terror. Now at last we have some anti-jihadist humor. A husband tells his totally veiled wife: "Look at you—you are still as beautiful as the day I met you!" Family members gathered at the bedside of their gravely ill father reel in horror when the attending physician tells them that the only available donor kidney is from a Jew. (A mullah is called in to convert the kidney to Islam.) A young suicide bomber fakes having a cold so that his parents won't make him carry out a planned attack on the U.S. embassy. (The father is angry: "I told all my friends to watch the TV news!" Mom, however, is sympathetic: "That embassy is not going anywhere, young man, and neither are you." Dad: "Samah, please—he's blowing himself up!" Mom: "Exactly! You want him giving his cold to everybody?" Etc., etc.) These brief but hilarious sketches come from a series called *Sands of Passion*, created by www.NationalBanana.com, which describes itself as an "online comedy network." Good luck to them, and let us give thanks for the grand American tradition of irreverent humor from which they spring.

■ Miss USA Rachel Smith, competing in the Miss Universe Pageant in Mexico City, was booed and jeered for a week by the local audience. This is an old story—maybe 160 years old. During an earlier bout of anti-American protest, at a World Cup qualifying match in 2005, one Mexican told the *Christian Science Monitor* that "every schoolboy knows about 1848," the year the Mexican War ended. Every schoolboy should know it. A corrupt elite could not fight a defensive war in mountainous terrain against outnumbered invaders who had to come from hundreds of miles away. Today, the same elite, unable to employ or feed its citizens, offloads them to the job markets and the transfer payments of the former enemy. If Mexicans used a fraction of their hatred

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THE WEEK...

and self-hatred for reform, they wouldn't have to bully young women.

■ This magazine has commented on a certain bassackwardness in American life: Americans feel obliged to learn Spanish, in order to communicate with newcomers. In truth, the newcomers should feel obliged to learn English. A sadly typical item appeared in the *Contra Costa Times*, a paper in the San Francisco Bay Area. The new superintendent of schools in little Pittsburg will assume her duties on July 15—"after she completes a two-week Spanish language immersion course in Mexico." Uh-huh. And how about her counterparts a hundred years ago? Did they feel obliged to sail to the Balkans, for a quick immersion course in Serbian? No? Then how on earth did they deal with their immigrant children? How did America ever get by? We repeat an old point, that must be repeated every year, even every week: Those who keep immigrant children stuck in their native language do them no favors. Those who block or retard assimilation do no one at all any favors.

■ What should we think of someone who destroys himself in public? "They did make love to this employment," said Hamlet of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, his faithless friends. They had it coming. Or is it better to show pity, for human weakness and the depth of the fall? Mrs. Cindy Sheehan announced that she was stepping down after almost two years as an antiwar-movement spokesman. She fired some parting shots at America ("you are not the country that I love") and at fellow anti-warriors, irked by her criticisms of insufficiently radical Democrats; they responded in kind, calling her an "attention whore," among other things. Attention addict, perhaps. But consider how futile and degrading her public life has been, and how great her loss. Army Spc. Casey Sheehan, her son, killed age 24 in Baghdad, is easier to judge. "How sleep the brave, who sink to rest by all their country's wishes blest!"

KEVORKIAN: BILL PUGLIANO/GETTY

■ Jack Kevorkian, just out of prison, got a sweetheart interview from fellow euthanasia proponent Mike Wallace. From that interview and other media treatments, you would never know that most of the people "Doctor Death" killed were not terminally ill. Some of them had no physical pain at all. You also wouldn't know how Kevorkian got his nickname. It wasn't from assisted suicide, but his habit, as a young doctor working at a hospital, of trying to photograph patients at the moment they died. He also advocated experiments on death-row prisoners, part of a life-long campaign, of which assisted suicide was just a part, to create a new scientific field called "obitiatry." Kevorkian's many fans in the media—the *New York Times* has been a cheerleader since the early 1990s—have had to labor mightily to obscure who Kevorkian really is: a ghoulish man with ghoulish causes.

■ The Summer of Love was 40 years ago, and since the sexagenarian baby boomers grapple us with as sweaty a grip as Lyndon Johnson ever did, we have been treated to media commemorations, and their accompanying debates: Was the lovely summer mostly cultural—acid, face painting, naked hippie chicks—or was it (left-wing) political? There is a great temptation to say, it was both, and both stank, though humanity is always more complicated. Some lively art got made: It may be hard to believe, looking at Sir Paul McCartney, an old tycoon with marital problems, but the Beatles were something. The battle against state-sponsored segregation had little to do with the summer of love, and had already tipped into radicalism and riots, but it was a battle that had to be fought (and one which found conservatives on the wrong side). To our credit, we were very much on the scene, correctly predicting that the Great Society would shipwreck. It may be ahistorical to pick and choose the past in this fashion, but it is also human, for it expresses our capacity to judge.

■ Vermont might secede from the Union, if a handful of local academics have their way. Secessionists (*U.S. OUT OF VT.!* reads a T-shirt) invoke a warm spot in local history, the period from 1777 to 1791 when Vermont was an independent state. It is a bogus warm spot, in many respects, since free Vermont

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was a real-estate speculation of Ethan Allen and his brothers, who played footsie by turns with the United States and England as it suited them. Now Vermont's long-ago independence has been hijacked by left-wing politics. "Do you want to stay in an empire that's in deep trouble?" asks Rob Williams, a history professor at Champlain College. How much easier to preen—not even on a national stage, but in snug, smug town meetings.

■ It is no secret that NATIONAL REVIEW and the *Wall Street Journal* have had different views on immigration for many years. In a recent webcast editorial meeting, the *Journal*'s editors discussed our views with a freedom that one expects in the boxing ring of ideas: We are "foaming at the mouth" over the immigration bill, we want to "harass" business, and so forth and so on. We accordingly invited two or three of the *Journal*'s finest to debate two or three of ours, in Washington, with a moderator of their choice. So far the *Journal* has declined our offer, on the grounds that it is a "publicity stunt." And since when are great newspapers and magazines averse to publicity—especially those that webcast their editorial meetings?

■ Another sidebar on the larger immigration story is the one about people a nation should be glad to let in, but who can't get a visa. A particularly egregious case has been causing a stir in Britain. Tul Bahadur Pun is a Gurkha, one of the hill people from Nepal who have served with great distinction in special units of the British military for 150 years. Mr. Pun's service was in World War II, where he won the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest military decoration, for conspicuous bravery in action. Now Mr. Pun is 84 and not in very good health. He would like to move to Britain, where he would have access to better health care. British consular officials in Nepal, however, refused a visa to him because he was "unable to demonstrate strong enough ties to the U.K." Fighting for a country so bravely that you win that country's highest military honor apparently doesn't count as having a tie. Cue Mr Kipling: "O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' 'Tommy, go away'; / But it's 'Thank you, Mister Atkins,' when the band begins to play . . ." (As we go to press, we hear that the British government, buckling under public outrage, has now granted Mr. Pun his visa.)

■ We have withheld comment on the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies—there are currently three of them—unconvinced that films based on an amusement-park ride can have anything significant to say about our politics or culture. On reflection, though, we would like to offer a brief nod of approval to the revival of the pirate as a stock figure in children's entertainment. There was a time, not so long ago, when a writer for children felt it part of his job to induce nightmares by deploying ruthless pirates, bloodthirsty Apaches, gun-totin' outlaws, bug-eyed space monsters, and other terrors from the depths of the collective unconscious. We had feared that political correctness might have swept all that away. No: Here is the good old pirate, complete with frock coat, boots, villainous mustachio, cutlass, and plank (for the walking of, that is). Avast there, and hoist the Jolly Roger!

PUBLIC POLICY

Adding Insult to Immigration

PRESIDENT BUSH, stuck with an approval rating variously estimated between 28 and 34 percent of the population, has settled on a novel political strategy: Insult your remaining supporters. Here is how he characterized critics of the immigration bill in a speech: "Those determined to find fault with this bill will always be able to look at a narrow slice of it and find something they don't like. If you want to kill the bill, if you don't want to do what's right for America, you can pick one little aspect out of it. You can use it to frighten people. Or you can show leadership and solve this problem once and for all."

In an interview, he added: "When you grow up in Texas like I did, you recognize the decency and humanity of Hispanics. And the truth of the matter is, a lot of this immigration debate is driven as a result of Latinos being in our country."

The president's description of the immigration debate is neither civil nor honest, and it shows little confidence in the appeal of any serious arguments for the bill.

Bush aides later told reporters that the president had ad-libbed his remarks, as though that made them better. Clearly the president considers himself morally superior to many of his supporters because he wants to legalize our illegal-immigrant population and they do not. This type of moral vanity has always been one of the president's besetting sins. He entered the national stage, after all, by implicitly placing himself apart from those other conservatives who were not, like him, "compassionate." This type of self-regard can have beneficial effects: It can make a leader stick to sound principles under pressure. At other times, as here, it can lead to a dangerously distorted view of reality.

The truth of the matter is not that this debate is about whether Hispanics are decent and human. Nor is it about a "narrow slice" of the bill. Many of the critics of the bill want to kill it, not out of some strange desire to foment fear for its own sake, but precisely because they do not think it is "right for America." The president's description of the immigration debate is neither civil nor honest, and it shows little confidence in the appeal of any serious arguments for the bill.

Those arguments are looking rather more shopworn by the day. Critics of the bill point out that it grants "probationary" legal status to illegal immigrants immediately, before any of the bill's vaunted "enforcement triggers" are put into effect. An illegal immigrant would only have to pass a one-day background check to get this status. It is hard to believe that this mass legalization would ever be revoked. So we would have an amnesty whether or not we got any added enforcement of the immigration laws. The administration has not put forth a single serious response to this criticism, preferring to change the subject to the critics' allegedly low motives. We must assume they have their reasons.

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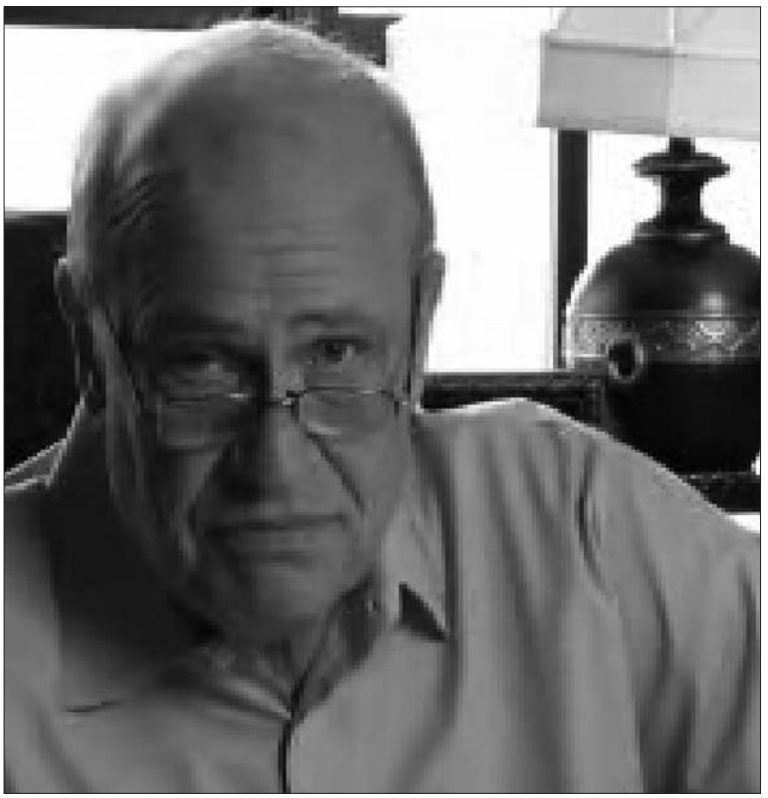

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Fred Thompson now appears on computers

KATE O'BEIRNE

WITHOUT raising a dime in donations, and with a campaign headquartered at his dining-room table, former senator Fred Thompson has landed in the top tier of candidates for the Republican presidential nomination. He has deftly used the Internet to call attention to his policy pronouncements, and to communicate with conservatives who are promoting his candidacy. Some observers speculate that Thompson will launch a wholly unorthodox Internet-centered campaign when he makes a formal announcement in early July. And some pundits caution that he can't beat the "too lazy" rap against him by campaigning via webcam from his comfortable, book-lined study. These predictions underestimate the 64-year-old veteran politician and actor. Although the Thompson campaign will make aggressive use of the Internet, the candidate can be expected to do the conventional retail politicking that the nomination process demands.

One Thompson adviser dismisses the "too lazy" criticism as evidence that his candidate, "who works very hard at understanding issues," is being underestimated. The adviser laughs at the thought that such a veteran politician anticipates a virtual campaign. But he does believe that Thompson will be able to put the Internet to unique use. He explains that Thompson has a sophisticated understanding of the Internet's power as a campaign tool, and that the Internet plays to Thompson's strengths as a communicator. The plan is to make creative use of the Internet to maximize the impact of Thompson's conventional efforts on the campaign trail. "While he's visiting every county in Iowa, everyone in every other county who wants to be [with him] will be with him. And when he's having coffee and doughnuts in New Hampshire, you see what he had to say 20 minutes later over your coffee in California."

The physically imposing, slow-talking Thompson projects a self-assured authority that obviously plays well on and off the TV screen. His supporters see, in their candidate's early online success, a natural match between the man and the medium, and believe that it will be hard for other candidates to replicate this. They cite the reactions that web users have posted to Thompson's online efforts—which are, they believe, more enthusiastic than those received by other candidates—as evidence of an audience that appreciates Thompson's sense of humor, apparent authenticity, and unabashedly conservative opinions.

In his commentaries over the past few months, Thompson has ventured where more timid politicians dare not. For example, he has sharply criticized Patrick Fitzgerald (who has "paid no price for his prosecutorial inconsistencies, his erroneous public statements, or his possible conflicts of interest") and Gandhi (for promoting "collective suicide"). He regularly takes on Democrats, Hollywood, and global-warming alarmists. In reaction to the shooting at Virginia Tech, he went after another liberal piety: "Whenever I've seen one of those 'gun-free zone' signs, especially outside a school filled with our youngest and most vulnerable citizens, I've always wondered exactly who those signs are directed at. Obviously, they don't mean much to the sort of man who murdered 32 people just a few days ago."

Thompson has an ability to make conservative positions reflect old-fashioned common sense. And his advisers confidently assert that, with an average score of 86 out of 100 on the American Conservative Union's scorecard during his eight years in the Senate, Thompson

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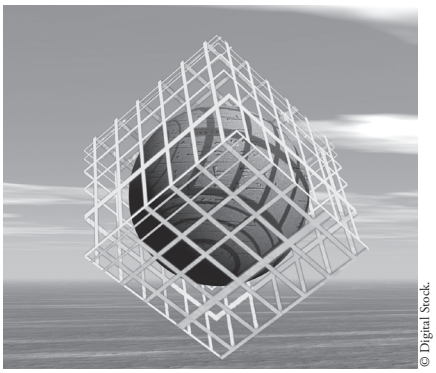

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will prove to be the most reliable conservative in the race.

After serving as an assistant U.S. attorney and as co-chief minority counsel on the Senate Watergate Committee, Thompson returned to private legal practice. In 1977, he defended the whistleblower in the Tennessee Parole Board scandal that toppled a governor accused of selling pardons. This also launched Thompson's acting career. Unable to find a plausible candidate to play Thompson in the movie *Marie*, the film's producers cast Thompson as himself. Now his informal political advisers believe that GOP voters are looking for a plausible conservative standard-bearer, and argue that they are ready to cast Thompson in a new role. "Fred Thompson can occupy the spot George Allen would have had," says a GOP strategist who is likely to join the Thompson campaign. He notes that about 70 percent of GOP primary voters identify themselves as "conservative," and a majority as "pro-life."

Thompson's strategists believe that frontrunners Rudy Giuliani and John McCain are both currently winning conservative support that will move to their candidate once he enters the race. In their view, Giuliani has hit a ceiling, and McCain (whom Thompson endorsed in 2000) is out of step with a disaffected Republican base seeking change. Here, too, they believe the search for a new messenger finds its expression in new technology. They detect an anti-Washington "Internet populism" that on the left has helped Barack Obama and on the right can be harnessed by Thompson.

A seasoned veteran of President Bush's campaigns doesn't dismiss the potential power of the Internet. He points to the Howard Dean campaign in 2004, and acknowledges that the Internet can allow a candidate with the right message to channel a lot of energy. "Technology lowers the barriers for entry into everything, including running for president," he explains. He also believes that the Internet provides an opportunity for a candidate to make up for certain disadvantages: a late start in raising funds and winning endorsements, and low name recognition. In Thompson, he sees an attractive messenger but is uncertain about how compelling the message will be.

Former Republican National Committee chairman Ed Gillespie, who is neutral in the nomination race and finds something praiseworthy in all of his party's candidates, agrees that Fred Thompson will be joining the field in time to compete effectively. He notes that Rudy Giuliani leads in the national polls, Mitt Romney leads in fundraising, and John McCain leads in local endorsements. He explains that the absence of a conventional frontrunner creates a volatile field, presenting an opportunity for Thompson.

In his first public appearance following his recent announcement that he had formed a "test the waters" committee, Fred Thompson was the keynote speaker at a fundraising dinner for the Virginia Republican party. He patiently posed for photos with top donors and appeared to be enjoying himself as he made the obligatory visits to each table. Had it not been past their bedtimes, babies would have been kissed. The Internet hasn't changed everything in politics. **NR**

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■ 2008 II

Getting to Know Her

New books shed further light on the Woman Who Would Be President

BYRON YORK

HILLARY CLINTON wasn't looking forward to the publication of two new biographies, *Her Way: The Hopes and Ambitions of Hillary Rodham Clinton*, by former and present *New York Times*men Jeff Gerth and Don Van Natta Jr., and *A Woman in Charge*, by Carl Bernstein, the lesser half of the Watergate team of Woodward and Bernstein. Senator Clinton is, of course, famously secretive—she probably wouldn't be happy with any biography unless it were written by, say, Sidney Blumenthal—and she refused to cooperate with either Gerth/Van Natta or Bernstein. Even before publication, her spokesmen had their putdown lines ready. "Is it possible to be quoted yawning?" Clinton spokesman Philippe Reines said to the *Washington Post*.

Now we have the books in hand, and in one sense it's hard to see why Clinton and her flacks were so worried. Neither volume contains the kind of bombshell revelation that dominates the news for days at a time, and neither could qualify as a hit job. Bernstein, in particular, seems well disposed toward his subject, whom he describes as "an intelligent woman endowed with energy, enthusiasm, humor, tempestuousness, inner strength, [and] spontaneity in private." Even accounting for a few unappealing attributes, such as her talent for retribution and her occasionally salty tongue, Bernstein concludes that Hillary Clinton is filled with "passion—which, down deep, is perhaps her most enduring and even endearing trait." Not exactly the words of a hit man.

But there's another sense in which Clinton was right to be concerned. Though bereft of headline-making disclosures, each book contains page after page of new

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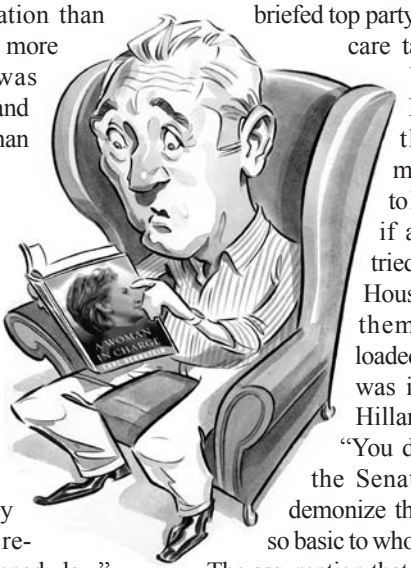
details, some of them so far ignored in the press, that reveal Hillary Rodham Clinton to be even more secretive, even more politically tin-eared, and even more combative than previously known.

For example, we've all heard about the famous War Room of the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign. But Gerth and Van Natta reveal that across the alley from the War Room was a more secretive effort, headed by Hillary and known as the Defense Team, that really got into the down-and-dirty stuff. The Defense Team's job was to knock down any allegation, no matter how well founded, about Bill Clinton's girlfriends, his avoidance of the draft, Whitewater, Hillary Clinton's legal work—anything that might hurt the campaign. And to do it by any means necessary, legal or not: Gerth and Van Natta report that on one occasion Mrs. Clinton listened to a "secretly recorded audiotape" of Clinton adversaries talking on the phone about the next possible bimbo eruption. "Bill's supporters monitored frequencies used by cell phones," Gerth and Van Natta add, "and the tape was made during one of those monitoring sessions."

Fast forward several years, and Gerth and Van Natta tell us about an organization called CREW, which stands for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. It's a well-known group, a supposedly non-partisan watchdog organization that in fact spends most of its time attacking Republicans (just ask Tom DeLay). The news is that Hillary's fingerprints are all over it. As described by Gerth and Van Natta, a Hillary operative named Jodi Sakol played a key role in setting up CREW. Sakol told the authors that Hillary was "proactive" and wanted to "beat the GOP at their own game" by setting up a group modeled on Judicial Watch, which had filed lawsuits against the Clintons in the 1990s. (Hillary seems to have forgotten that Judicial Watch did a turnaround and began attacking the Bush administration after the 2000 election.) Hillary helped line up donors for CREW, volunteered ideas, okayed the involvement of her top pollster, Mark Penn, and looked on as her "watchdogs" went out after DeLay and other GOP leaders. Somehow she managed to keep her name out of all this.

Gerth and Van Natta also show Clinton employing secret staffers, in the process sneaking around Senate rules that don't suit her fancy. They show her threatening a staffer with "You'll never work in Democratic politics again" if the staffer failed to cover up tax returns showing Clinton's commodities-trading profits. And they show her directing the operation to stonewall the independent-counsel investigations of her husband.

Bernstein's book doesn't dwell on that kind of detail. But with a lot of prime sources in the Clinton camp, Bernstein goes deeper than Gerth and Van Natta, portraying a Hillary Clinton who was even more closely involved in the running of her husband's administration than we thought. And not only more closely involved—she was also even less competent and more politically clumsy than we thought.



In a scene from the frenzied Clinton transition after the 1992 election, Bernstein portrays Mrs. Clinton sitting down with top political adviser Dick Morris, musing over what position to take in the new administration. Hillary thought she might make a fine attorney general—until someone remembered the "Bobby Kennedy law" that forbade a president from making nepotism appointments to his cabinet. She thought about becoming White House chief of staff—Bernstein reports that Morris "was one of several people with whom Hillary discussed the question of being chief of staff." Or perhaps she might be the chief domestic-policy adviser.

She wasn't kidding. Bernstein also describes Mrs. Clinton's putting dibs on the West Wing office space that had, in previous administrations, been occupied by the vice president. Roy Neel, Al Gore's top aide, stood by astonished, finally complaining to Susan Thomases, one of Hillary's closest operatives. In the end, Mrs. Clinton didn't get the office, but she did take charge of her husband's top priority, health-care reform. And in a sense she was in charge of pretty much everything else, too; Bernstein writes that historians "will be hard pressed not to portray the White House years 1993–2000 as a co-presidency."

What Bernstein reveals, better than anyone else has so far, is how much Hillary Clinton's grab for power disturbed top White House and administration aides—not Republicans in opposition, but the very Democrats who were trying to make the Clinton administration work. Lloyd Bentsen, Donna Shalala, Leon Panetta, Alice Rivlin—all opposed the choice of Hillary to head the health-care task force. "Mostly, [these] people thought the idea—the whole system Hillary was setting up—was crazy," Shalala told Bernstein.

Democrats outside the administration were unhappy, too. Bernstein describes a meeting in April 1993 at which Hillary briefed top party leaders on the health-care task force's progress. When then-senator Bill Bradley suggested that some changes might be required, she told him to forget it; if any lawmakers even tried, she said, the White House would "demonize" them. Bradley later unloaded on Bernstein. "That was it for me in terms of Hillary Clinton," he said. "You don't tell members of the Senate you are going to demonize them. It was obviously so basic to who she is. The arrogance. The assumption that people with questions are enemies. The disdain. The hypocrisy."

And then there was the rest of Washington. During Hillary's early days in the White House, Washington journalist and social fixture Sally Quinn wrote a much-noted column saying Hillary should remember that she wasn't elected president. Quinn's impudence angered Bill Clinton, who raged against Quinn in a conversation with advisers James Carville and Rahm Emanuel. But years later Emanuel told Bernstein, "James and I had the same take on it, which was, 'God bless Sally for being honest.' She was f—ing honest."

And those, as they say, were her friends. In the end, the picture of Hillary Rodham Clinton that emerges from these two books is of a woman who would do almost anything to gain power but didn't know what to do with it once she got it, beyond battling her enemies and alienating her friends. Sometimes it seems there's not much more we can learn about Hillary. Gerth, Van Natta, and Bernstein show us that's not true. **NR**

DARREN GYGI

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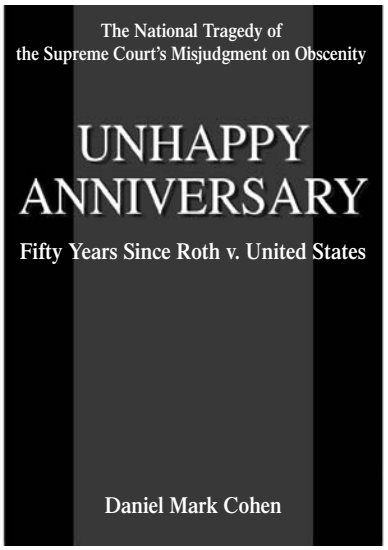
Democracy Hypocrisy



In Unhappy Anniversary, *Daniel Mark Cohen hands down a devastating indictment of the United States Supreme Court for the immaculate failure of its obscenity jurisprudence and the consequent corruption of American children by Internet pornography.*

Cohen argues that contrary to the rule of American law, but as a matter of common sense, speech is properly defined in terms of words, and so pictures do not constitute a form of speech. Hence, pornography, while it may be shielded by other provisions of the Constitution, is not entitled to the supreme protection of the First Amendment.

At last, Unhappy Anniversary *constitutes an impassioned statement of advocacy for a forsaken constituency in this country: more than sixty million children who have been effectively abandoned by the United States Supreme Court and the American nation as a whole.*

> *We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, . . . appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions . . . with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, . . . pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.* – Declaration of Independence

If the people of the United States collectively endorse a single prayer, one that, universal in its reach, transcends the necessary differences in faith and ethnicity that otherwise divide the nation, that prayer consists of three simple words:

God Bless America.

But why should God bless America when her people, in ever increasing numbers, (now easily counted in the tens of millions), participate in an unacknowledged culture of prostitution, manifest most readily in their mass patronage of Internet and cable-television pornography? (For what is pornography, after all, but prostitution mediated by photographic cameras?)

And why should God bless America when, as a consequence, she insists on the free, unregulated distribution via the Internet of the most vile sexual images so that, hourly, such pictures reach and indelibly corrupt the otherwise innocent eyes and chaste minds of the country's millions of unsupervised and latch-key children?

God Bless America?

More than two thousand years ago, many centuries before English was spoken on earth, some unknown, now long-forgotten soul composed the following words, translated here from the original Hebrew:

Unless the Lord builds a house, they who build it labor in vain . . .

Many will recognize that proverb as the first line of psalm 127. However, is it possible that those words point to something more than the wisdom of acknowledging the limit of human industry? Perhaps Samuel Adams, Founding Father from Massachusetts, was seeking to convey something of the deeper truth contained in that proverb when in 1775, on the tenuous eve of the American Revolutionary War, he wrote:

"We may look to Armies for our Defense, but Virtue is our best security."

If Mr. Adams' words are true, then it explains why the billions of dollars our nation invested in the C.I.A., the F.B.I., and the Department of Defense were without force or effect in the months and days leading up to September 11, 2001. For, although many are acquainted with the first line of the psalm, few are familiar with the line that follows:

unless the Lord keeps a city, the watchman stays awake in vain . . .

UNHAPPY ANNIVERSARY
Fifty Years Since Roth v. United States
The National Tragedy of the Supreme Court's Misjudgment on Obscenity
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■ CAPITOL HILL

From Abscam On

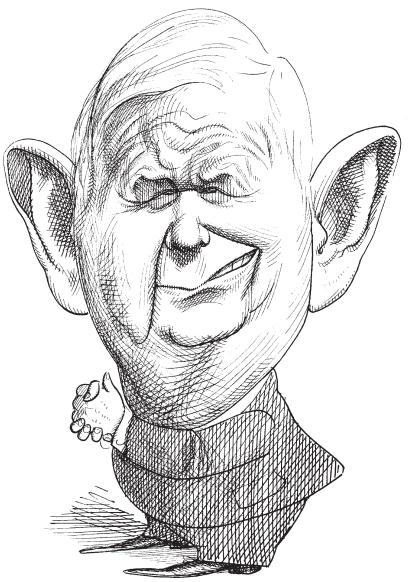
The career and m.o. of Rep. John P. Murtha

STEPHEN SPRUIELL

JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA'S "Showcase for Commerce" started in 1991 as a small trade show for area businesses, but since then it has grown into one of the U.S. defense industry's most important events of the year. Many big names are represented—Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin all have booths within a few yards of each other—but the star of the show is John P. Murtha, Johnstown's U.S. congressman, who attends every year and visits every exhibit booth. An entourage follows Murtha around the crowded arena, including a photographer, several senior staff members, and one assistant whose sole job appears to be gathering promotional materials and taking copious notes. At each booth, powerful defense-industry executives greet him with smiles and handshakes, eager to show him their latest prototypes and proposals.

The showcase is symbolic of Johnstown's transformation from a hard-hit former steel town into, as one contractor who attended this year's showcase put it, "the beating heart of the U.S. defense industry," or at least one of its major regional hubs. Murtha gets a hero's welcome at the showcase, not just because it was his idea, but also because his position as chairman or ranking member of the defense appropriations subcommittee for the past 18 years has a lot to do with the defense industry's interest in the region.

In turn, Murtha's patronage for his district has made him one of the most powerful members of the House of Representatives and a huge roadblock standing between the Democrats and the kind of meaningful ethics reform they promised during their 2006 "culture of corruption" campaign. The money he secures for Johnstown comes back to him in the form of campaign contributions, which ensure his reelection and provide him with surplus cash to give out to other members. Murtha has been reelected 16 times, giving him seniority in the House and the plum committee assignments that go with it. His chairmanship of the defense subcommittee gives him control over half of the earmarks in every defense appropriations bill, which buy him even more loyalty and influence in the House. On top of all that, Murtha has a strong relationship with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, dating back to when he helped get her a seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee. He is an integral part of the new Democratic majority—and it cannot be the party of institutional reform as long as he is in power.



Rep. John P. Murtha

Evidence of that was on recent display when Murtha twice violated a new rule governing earmarks—provisions lawmakers can attach to bills directing agencies to fund specific projects—and got away with it when his party defeated a Republican's attempt to hold him accountable. During one of their sporadic attempts at ethics reform since taking over Congress, House Democrats passed a new rules package in January that included a measure forbidding members to condition earmarks for other members on how they vote. In early May, Rep. Mike Rogers, a Michigan Republican, offered a motion to remove a $23 million earmark for the National Drug Intelligence Center from the intelligence authorization bill on the grounds that several government agencies tasked with auditing the center have declared it to be an inefficient and duplicative waste of taxpayer money. The only problem with Rogers's attempt to cut the center's funding was that the center is in Johnstown, and the guy who sponsored the earmark was John Murtha.

First, Murtha allegedly threatened Rep. Todd Tiahrt, a Kansas Republican and fellow member of the Appropriations Committee, for voting with Rogers. (Tiahrt, whose district houses a Boeing assembly plant with business before Murtha's subcommittee, declined to comment for this article and isn't discussing the incident.) Then Murtha went after Rogers: "I hope you don't have any earmarks in the defense appropriation bill because they are gone, and you will not get any earmarks now and forever," Murtha said. When Rogers told Murtha that this was not the way to handle their dispute, Murtha responded, "That's the way I do it."

Rogers says, "As a former FBI agent, and with about twelve years' experience in politics now, I can tell the difference between what is passionate, emotional, sometimes even angry political speech, versus what is certainly intended to be an act of intimidation." He says Murtha's threat clearly crossed that line. Yet when Rogers introduced a motion to reprimand Murtha for violating the new rule, all but two House Democrats voted to kill the resolution without a debate. "I wasn't surprised that [the Democrats] took the partisan position on [the resolution]," Rogers says, "but I was a little surprised that they didn't allow the debate . . . or at least refer it to the ethics committee on their own. They took neither option. They basically said, 'We're not even going to talk about it.'"

Among Democrats voting to shield Murtha was Zack Space, the freshman Democrat who replaced scandal-plagued Ohio Republican Bob Ney and who has taken a prominent role as a spokesman for the Democrats' new lobbying-reform bill. A week before Murtha's run-in with Rogers, Space went on a C-SPAN pro-

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Meet the Drug War Winners and Losers

The Winners

Prison Guards - $45,000 a year to start, no college required. In California the Prison Guards Union is the most powerful lobby in the state. Not surprisingly, they support legislators who are "tough on crime."[1]

Prison Owners - $3 billion a year goes to the highly profitable private prison industry whose owners bank on harsh drug laws.[2]

The Drug Testing Industry - Former drug warriors make millions testing our kids for drugs – even though it makes no measurable difference in actual drug use.[3]

Corrupt Police - Confiscation of private property is now a significant source of police funding. It's up to the accused to prove it wasn't from drug money.[4]

The Pharmaceutical Industry -Several major drug companies are frantically researching the cannabis plant for pain-killing and anti-nausea compounds that can be patented – while simultaneously spending millions on P.R. to keep the plant itself illegal.[5]

Terrorists - $320 billion a year in tax-free illegal drug sales worldwide – enough to fund the worst things you can think of.[6]

The Losers

Education - As prison budgets grow, the money has to come from somewhere – like schools, teachers and students. The U.S is now losing ground to Europe and Asia in education, but we're still #1 in incarceration at three times the world average.[7]

Public Safety - Prohibition creates crime. Criminals need safe turf. So they take over the inner cities by terrorizing the powerless and defenseless residents. Try to imagine this happening in upscale neighborhoods.[8]

Police Departments - Drug corruption scandals are rocking police departments all over the country because of the staggering amount of loose cash in play.[9]

Equality - Only 13% of the country's drug users are African American but they're twice as likely to get arrested as whites and four times as likely to do prison time.[10]

The Children - With such a high percentage of minority parents in prison, who's supposed to be raising their kids? What will be the "blowback?"[11]

70% of the war is about marijuana. Isn't it time we tried peace?

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org www.MedicalMJ.org
www.TreatingDrugAddiction.org
info@csdp.org

For footnotes see http://www.csdp.org/publicservice/winner_notes.htm

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gram and said, "Members of Congress must know that if they break the rules, they will be caught and punished." Given that Space and a number of freshmen like him owe their seats to their party's rhetoric on the subject of GOP corruption, one might be surprised that not a single one of them voted to reprimand Murtha. But their actions make more sense in light of Representative Murtha's recent fundraising activities.

Last year Murtha formed a leadership political-action committee called Majority PAC, through which he contributed over $150,000 to other Democrats' campaigns. According to the Majority Accountability Project, a conservative-leaning watchdog group, this included nearly $50,000 to the campaigns of 19 freshmen, including Space. Even though leadership PACs became more popular in 2006 among all members of Congress, it turned out to be an especially advantageous time for Murtha to establish one. Just as a new crop of reform-minded Democrats looked like it was headed for Congress, Murtha added a new weapon to his arsenal of influence.

Considering Murtha's history of ethical transgressions, perhaps this showed some foresight on his part. Ever since his notorious involvement as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 1980 Abscam sting operation, Murtha has consistently opposed tougher ethics rules and has actually co-sponsored legislation to make it harder to investigate members of Congress. In 1998, he and Pennsylvania Republican Joe McDade (who was indicted but acquitted on bribery charges in the early 1990s) sponsored a bill to create a congressionally appointed review board with oversight into Justice Department investigations of lawmakers' activities. At the time, congressional watchdog groups called it the Corrupt Politicians' Protection Board. More recently, Murtha referred to the Democrats' latest attempts at ethics reform as "total crap."

All of these various aspects of Murtha's m.o.—the earmarks, the campaign cash, and the network of personal connections—were on display at this year's trade show in Johnstown. Take the story of Kuchera Industries, founded in 1985 just outside of Johnstown. Kuchera's executives paid little attention to their congressman until one of Murtha's former aides, Carmen Scialabba, approached CEO Bill Kuchera in 2001 about a non-profit Scialabba created to help disabled people find work. It must have seemed like the opportunity of a lifetime for the small manufacturing firm. The *Washington Post* reported last December that Kuchera subsequently joined the non-profit's board, started employing more disabled workers, and hired a lobbying firm chaired by a retired congressman— Joe McDade.

FEC records show that Kuchera's top officials proceeded to donate more than $45,000 to Murtha and his PAC over the next three election cycles, and an analysis of Murtha's recent fundraising efforts shows an even more dramatic increase in Kuchera's contributions. In just the first three months of 2007, Kuchera's top executives have given Murtha and his PAC close to $20,000—nearly half the amount they contributed over the previous six years. Last year, according to a study done by Taxpayers for Common Sense, Murtha earmarked $1.3 million for Kuchera in the defense appropriations bill. This year, the day after Murtha stopped by all three companies' booths at the Johnstown showcase, Kuchera announced at a press conference that it had been awarded two new contracts, totaling $14 million, by Northrop Grumman and Raytheon—both of which have substantial business before Murtha's subcommittee.

Murtha declined to be interviewed for this article, but in response to a question about his involvement in the deal, a spokesman for Murtha wrote, "Our staff works with community organizations and leaders to effectively market our region. The announcements made at the Showcase were a direct result of area businesses providing quality work coupled with superior responsiveness at a price that is frequently unmatched."

Of course, Murtha has never apologized for steering money into his district. But for the Democrats, he creates an uncomfortable political problem by demonstrating how powerless they are to challenge his way of doing business. It might be good politics to campaign against the other guy's network of campaign cash and influence, but apparently it's even better politics actually to have such a network. Just ask 17-term congressman Jack Murtha. **NR**

■ NORTH KOREA

'Because That's Where the Money Is'

The U.S. government finds a way to hurt Kim Jong Il

MARIO LOYOLA

Since the stern warnings delivered in the "Axis of Evil" speech in 2002, North Korea and most other problem states have felt distinctly undeterred from doing much as they please. Five years on, it hardly seems as if the Bush administration will be remembered for excellence in the art of credible deterrence. But that may yet change, with the administration's discovery of a fabulous new weapon: the Department of the Treasury.

This story of serendipity begins early in 2002, as the administration set out to reformulate North Korea policy. "Appeasement was out," one former administration official explains. "The imperative was to change North Korea's behavior." For that, it was necessary to gain a better understanding of the sources of North Korean conduct. And the first question was how the ruling class of Pyongyang was living better than ever, even while North Korea was in utter economic ruin—in default on its debt and unable to borrow internationally. In particular, how was North Korea financing a trade deficit as high as $800 million a year without any access to the international capital markets?

Part of the answer was charity, but much of the answer was simply crime. "You can make some money selling missiles," the former official observes, "but do you have any idea what the profit margins on coun-

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Saudi "Peace Initiative"

Is it meant to lead to peace or to Israel's destruction?

Early in 2002, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia granted an interview to Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, in which he declared that if Israel were to withdraw from the "occupied territories," full normalization of relations with the Arab countries would ensue. That interview was published in *The New York Times* on February 17, 2002. It became known as the Saudi "Peace Initiative" and was considered a "breakthrough" on the road to peace in the Middle East.

What are the facts?

An Arab ultimatum. By the time the dust settled and the Saudi "Peace Initiative" was formalized, its demands were substantially expanded. It called for 1) full Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, including the "Syrian Golan Heights;" 2) achievement of a "just solution" to the Palestinian refugee problem; 3) acceptance of the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as it capital.

The most unacceptable of those three conditions is the second. As best can be determined, there were about 650,000 refugees during the 1948 War of Independence. It can be assumed that virtually all of them are by now deceased. But the claim for "repatriation" has been extended to their descendants, who are by now said to have increased to 5 million. These "refugees" have been kept in "refugee camps" for sixty years, for the purpose of keeping the sore festering and to overwhelm Israel when the time came. The twentieth century, with its wars and dislocations, has produced millions upon millions of refugees. The Palestinian "refugees" are the only ones who are being taken care of by UNWRA, an agency of the United Nations created especially for them. No other refugees have similar consideration. The maintenance cost of the "Palestinian refugees" is billions of dollars a year. Who pays for most of this? You guessed it: the United States, of course.

The clear reason that the "repatriation" of these "refugees" (or rather their descendants) into Israel is unacceptable is that, besides their absorption and integration being an economic impossibility, their influx would immediately destroy Israel as a Jewish state and as the last refuge for all persecuted Jews in the world. Some believe that the concept of Israel as a Jewish state is an anachronism and should be done away with. But the reality is that Israel was created as just that, the state of the Jews, by mandate of the League of Nations, by the Balfour Declaration and by the decision of the United Nations.

Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states that have adopted the Saudi "Peace Initiative" as their own, will not accept any discussion or any modification of their proposal. It is "take it or leave it." It is an ultimatum. They threatened that, if Israel did not accept the plan in its entirety – it will have renounced peace and will face the "lords of war."

> "The Arabs...must teach their children...that their future and their welfare are inextricably bound up with the future, welfare and prosperity of Israel."

What about the other two conditions of the "peace initiative"? Full withdrawal from the "occupied territories" is impossible, given the virulent hatred of the Arabs against the Jews, their bizarre unwillingness to even acknowledge Israel's existence and their declared intention of destroying it by any means. Israel committed the foolishness of returning the vast Sinai – an invaluable strategic buffer zone and source of all its potential petroleum needs – to Egypt. It committed the further folly of withdrawing from the south Lebanon buffer zone and the even greater folly of turning Gaza over to the Arabs. It is true that Israel and Egypt have been at peace – the coldest peace conceivable – but mortars and rockets are almost daily launched against Israeli cities from both Gaza and from southern Lebanon. One can imagine what incredible destruction would be wreaked on Israel if it were to commit the ultimate folly of turning the so-called "occupied territories" over to its deadly enemies, sworn to its destruction. The entire country – its population centers, its industrial infrastructure, its utility installations, and its international airport – would be subject to daily barrages from the Judean Heights. The most advanced weaponry, including fighter planes and tanks, and quite likely even Syrian and Iranian troops, would be stationed in the "West Bank." Without the Judean Heights and without the strategic Jordan Valley in its control, Israel would be utterly indefensible and an easy victim of those who ceaselessly dream of its destruction.

If the Saudi "Peace Initiative" is not the solution to the apparently interminable Arab-Israel conflict, what then is? The first step is for the Arabs (and for the Iranians) to accept the reality of Israel's existence and permanence, not to teach their children that the Jews are the sons of monkeys and pigs, and not to educate them to become suicide bombers and martyrs. They must teach them that Israel is here to stay and that their future and their welfare are inextricably bound up with the future, welfare and prosperity of Israel. That may be a long time in coming, but no real peace is possible without it.

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terfeit cigarettes are?" The intelligence community presented a picture of criminal profit margins on a breathtaking scale: from drug traffic, illegal weapons sales, counterfeit "superdollars" so high-tech that they were virtually undetectable—the list went on and on.

Together with several officials of the Treasury—chiefly Juan Sarate and Daniel Glaser—State Department adviser David Asher and several of his colleagues formed a working group called the Illicit Activities Initiative to track North Korea's racketeering. As 2002 turned into 2003, the Treasury's Secret Service surged its resources into the investigation. The initiative mushroomed into a massive international effort, involving the Justice Department and hundreds of executive-branch officials, as well as over a dozen foreign governments. The Bush administration quickly gained an understanding of the vast network that supported Pyongyang's luxuries.

The North Korean regime is organized much like a mafia family; and like the mafia since Al Capone's time, its greatest vulnerability was finances. It was Sarate, currently a deputy national security adviser, who first came to grasp that an obscure provision of the Patriot Act—Section 311—could be used to target North Korea's criminal network at its weakest points, and at the same time unleash a potentially devastating cascade of problems for North Korea around the world.

Section 311 amended the Bank Secrecy Act by empowering the Treasury Department to designate suspect foreign banks as "institutions of primary money laundering concern." It could then require domestic U.S. banks to impose "special measures" in their dealings with those institutions, such as closure of "correspondent accounts." These fine surgical instruments, the deadliness of which is obscured by the impenetrable technical jargon used to describe them, are designed to cut the suspect institution off from the U.S. banking system.

The Treasury focused on a small Macau bank, Banco Delta Asia (BDA), as a hub of illicit North Korean finances. On September 15, 2005, it issued an initial finding that designated BDA an institution of "primary money laundering concern" and launched a formal proceeding. The Treasury announcement was timed to increase pressure on North Korea in the six-party talks, which were then deadlocked as usual. A few days later, the North Koreans agreed to fully denuclearize the Korean peninsula in exchange for economic aid and normalization of relations.

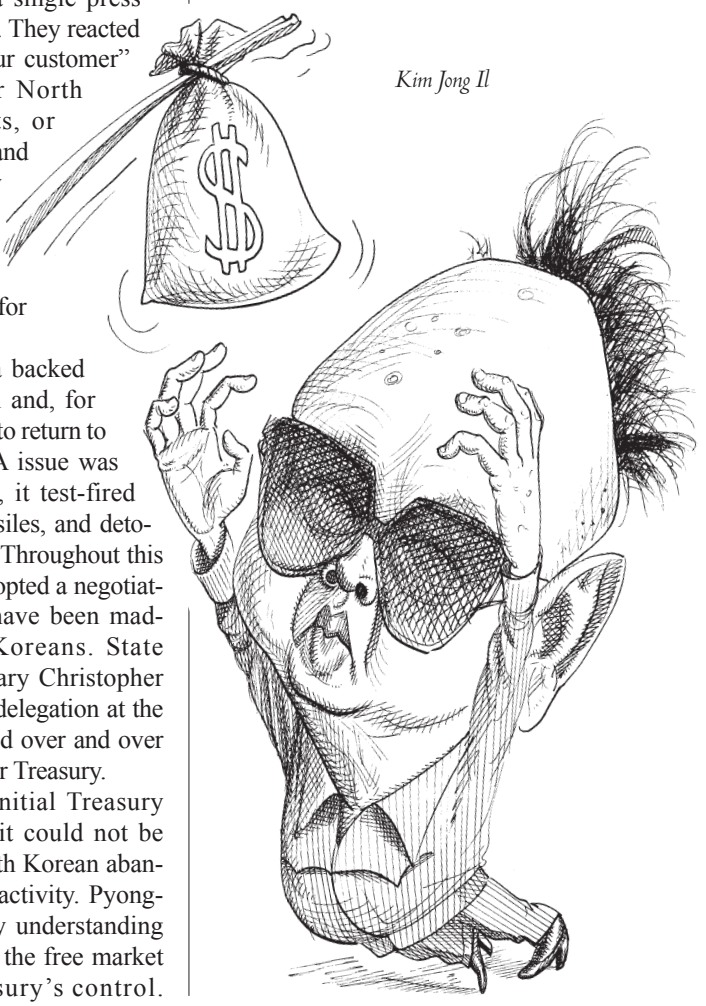
Meanwhile, in Macau, an unexpected drama was unfolding. The very day after the Treasury announcement, there was a run on the bank: Depositors withdrew some $40 million, wiping out the bank's reserves. Fearing a collapse that might spread to other banks in the former Portuguese colony, the Macanese authorities took over BDA and froze some $25 million held in several dozen accounts related to North Korea.

The effects of the Treasury action spread with a life of their own, and Kim Jong Il's problems had only just begun. Without any apparent prompting from the Macanese authorities, the Bank of China froze several of its North Korea-related accounts in Macau. Banks around the world realized that they could suffer a fate similar to BDA's with a single press release from the Treasury. They reacted by increasing "know your customer" due diligence on their North Korea–related accounts, or closing them altogether, and by refusing to take on any new North Korean business. The Treasury's modest preliminary action turned into a disaster for Kim's regime.

Angered, North Korea backed out of the six-party deal and, for more than a year, refused to return to the talks unless the BDA issue was resolved. In the interim, it test-fired several new ballistic missiles, and detonated a nuclear warhead. Throughout this period, the Americans adopted a negotiating position that must have been maddening to the North Koreans. State Department undersecretary Christopher Hill, who leads the U.S. delegation at the six-party talks, proclaimed over and over that he could not speak for Treasury.

The damage of the initial Treasury finding was done, and it could not be undone, except by a North Korean abandonment of its criminal activity. Pyongyang had great difficulty understanding that the consequences in the free market were outside the Treasury's control. Finally, after Treasury deputy assistant secretary Glaser met with the North Koreans in December 2006, Pyongyang agreed to return to the six-party talks. By mid-February, the North Koreans agreed to freeze their Yongbyon reactor and readmit IAEA inspectors in exchange for economic aid, and the U.S. promised to "resolve" the BDA issue. Initial reports suggested that the U.S. had caved on BDA; conservative commentators and former Bush-administration officials expressed outrage. But when challenged about the supposed concession, one State Department official shot back, "Was it a concession?"

As it turns out, the "concession" was mostly imaginary. After the Macanese authorities were given some time to remedy the troubled bank's problems, the Treasury finally did "resolve" the BDA issue on March 14, 2007—by issuing a final ruling declaring BDA to be of "primary money laundering concern." The Treasury announcement was almost com-



Kim Jong Il

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ically blunt: "BDA Cut Off From US Financial System."

The North Koreans hit the roof. They wanted their accounts unfrozen, period. But what could the Americans say? They hadn't frozen the accounts in the first place—the Macanese authorities had done that themselves, and not at Washington's behest; and Macau falls under Chinese control. Exasperated, the North Koreans demanded that the U.S. help them gain access to their $25 million. The Americans responded with an almost tongue-in-cheek statement from the Treasury Department on April 10:

> Based on previous discussions with the Chinese, Macanese, and DPRK officials, as well as understandings reached with the DPRK on the use of these funds, the United States would support a decision by the Macau authorities to unblock the accounts in question.

The Macanese duly unfroze the tainted funds. But there was another problem: The North Koreans couldn't move the money. There was no bank in the world willing to accept a wire transfer of funds allegedly connected to criminal activity—in part because any such bank might then find itself in BDA's shoes.

Nowadays, North Korea is insisting that the U.S. government created the problem, and must now solve it. A few weeks ago, Wachovia Bank, which had maintained a correspondent relationship with BDA until the initial Treasury finding, revealed that it had been asked by the U.S. government to accept a wire transfer of funds from accounts at BDA. Fearing the risk to its reputation, even in the absence of Treasury enforcement action, Wachovia refused.

The most surprising thing about this new American weapon is how irreversible its effects are. The same transparency imposed on the U.S. financial system by the securities regulations, which created the world's most stable and reliable investment climate, is spreading inexorably with globalization. It all recalls the essential theme of Sam Peckinpah's westerns—how the Wild West gave up its lawlessness in the face of modernity. To all who would follow in North Korea's footsteps, the Treasury has become perhaps the most credible—and certainly the most inescapable—of America's deterrents. NR

■ THE MIDDLE EAST

A Ghastly Little Place

The fate of the Gaza Strip

KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Nahed Nimer had just finished afternoon prayers at his home in Gaza City when he heard loud banging at the door. About twelve gunmen stormed their way in, aiming rifles at the terrified man and his family. "Come with us for ten minutes," the intruders demanded as they dragged the 58-year-old father of six away.

Mr. Toameh is a Jerusalem-based journalist who specializes in Palestinian affairs.

Two hours later, Nimer's family received a phone call from a friend telling them that their father had been admitted to a hospital. "We rushed to the emergency room, but my father was not there," recalls the oldest son, Muhammad. "We were told that he had been taken directly to the morgue. He had been brutally tortured before being shot 50 times in various parts of the body."

Nimer was a victim of the bloody power struggle that has been raging for more than a year in the Gaza Strip between the Islamic movement Hamas and its rival secular faction, Fatah. He was known as one of the political leaders of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. His murderers are believed to be members of the Fatah-controlled security forces loyal to Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. The parties have been fighting each other ever since Hamas came to power in a free and fair parliamentary election in January 2006. Most of the fighting has taken place in the Gaza Strip, home to an estimated 1.4 million Palestinians, the majority of whom live in harsh

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conditions in scores of refugee camps.

In the Gaza Strip, unlike the West Bank, Hamas is extremely popular. That's why U.S.-backed attempts by Abbas and Fatah over the past year to undermine Hamas have so far been unsuccessful. As one of Abbas's top security advisers admitted recently, "President Abbas is in a difficult situation because Hamas is now in control."

In the last round of internecine fighting in Gaza, Abbas's security forces suffered one defeat after another. This is particularly interesting given that Abbas has more than 40,000 policemen and gunmen under his jurisdiction. Hamas, by contrast, is said to have no more than 12,000 soldiers. So how come Abbas hasn't been able to crush Hamas, especially when the U.S. and some Arab countries have given him large amounts of weapons and millions of dollars?

Abbas, like the vast majority of the Palestinians, is well aware of the fact that Hamas came to power as a result of a free and democratic vote. Undoubtedly, he and his followers would love to see Hamas removed from power. But the last thing they want is to be perceived as part of a U.S. and Israeli plot to get rid of a democratically elected government. Moreover, there is no guarantee that Fatah would win if elections were held tomorrow in the Palestinian territories. That's because it has yet to draw the appropriate conclusions from its defeat in 2006.

Fatah lost that vote mainly owing to rampant financial corruption, abuse of power, and mismanagement. Since then, its leaders have done almost nothing to implement reforms and get rid of the icons of corruption in their midst. The Fatah candidates who ran in the 2006 parliamentary election are still around, and many of them even belong to Abbas's inner circle. Instead of searching their souls and preparing to run in another free and democratic election, Abbas and his colleagues are obsessed with the dream of removing Hamas from power. They still haven't come to terms with the fact that they lost, and would be willing to do almost anything to regain what they believe should be theirs forever, if only they could get away with it.

Many Palestinians see the power struggle between Hamas and Fatah as a fight not between good guys and bad guys, but between bad guys and bad guys. The parties are not in dispute over democracy, reforms, and peace; they are killing each other for money and power. The Hamas–Fatah confrontation has resulted in a dramatic breakdown of law and order, especially in the Gaza Strip, where thousands of militiamen belonging to various factions and clans are now roaming the streets freely. Hardly a day passes without a Palestinian's falling victim to this state of anarchy and lawlessness. In the course of the fighting, which has claimed the lives of more than 160 Palestinians since the beginning of the year, children have been murdered in front of their parents, mothers and fathers have been shot execution-style in front of their children, wounded people have been disconnected from life-support machines in hospitals, bodies have been mutilated and dismembered, ambulances and medical teams have been assaulted, and schools, universities, mosques, churches, and medical centers have been blown up.

Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip, May 2007

MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS

Israel's 2005 unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip has done much to aggravate the problem. By abandoning the border between Gaza and Egypt, the Israelis paved the way for the infiltration of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups. Today, there are at least three such groups operating in Gaza. In their attempts to impose a Taliban-style regime, they have bombed Internet cafes, restaurants, and schools that allegedly promote Western values. One of the groups, calling itself the Righteous Swords of Islam, threatened to behead female newscasters on Palestine TV who refuse to cover their faces.

"The Gaza Strip will soon become an international base for global jihad," said a senior Palestinian security official. "We are no longer in control and we don't know what to do. We don't have a strong leader who is capable of making tough decisions."

Most foreign journalists have stopped traveling to the Gaza Strip for fear of being kidnapped by one of the powerful gangs. In the past two years, more than 30 foreigners have been abducted for ransom. In most cases, the hostages were released in return for money and jobs in the Palestinian Authority.

By staying away from Gaza, the foreign media have left the coverage of events there in the hands of local Palestinian stringers and reporters, most of whom are affiliated with one of the factions. They have the power to decide what the world will see, hear, and read about what happens in the Gaza Strip. Needless to say, most of them are not keen on bringing Gaza's dirty laundry out into the open.

Following the Israeli "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip, the Palestinians had an opportunity to turn the area into the Middle East's Hong Kong or Singapore. Instead they have turned it into one of the world's most dangerous places, where even aid workers and human-rights activists are not safe. The former Jewish settlements of the Gaza Strip, which were supposed to be replaced with industrial zones and modern housing projects, have become training bases for armed gangs.

At a meeting with a group of businessmen last week, President Abbas admitted that anarchy in the Gaza Strip has blocked development, "and this is unfortunate." This was indeed a rare moment of truth for Abbas—the first time he did not blame his people's miseries on the "occupation." In fact, some Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are no longer afraid to say that they miss the "good old days" of Israeli occupation. In the words of a former Palestinian minister, "We were dreaming of Hong Kong and Singapore and instead we got Somalia and the Taliban." **NR**

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Game Plan

What conservatives should do about global warming

JIM MANZI

It is no longer possible, scientifically or politically, to deny that human activities have very likely increased global temperatures; what remains in dispute is the precise magnitude of the human impact. Conservatives should accept this reality—and move on to the question of what we should do about it. This would put us in a much better position to prevent a massive, counterproductive intervention in the U.S. economy.

Let's start with the facts. Why should we believe that rising concentrations of CO_2 and other greenhouse gases are driving increases in global temperatures? Not because of liberal scaremongering, or the media's fixation on every unusual weather event that comes along, but simply because of the underlying physics.

CO_2 is a greenhouse gas, which is to say, it absorbs and redirects infrared radiation but not shorter-wavelength radiation. The sun constantly bombards our planet with a significant amount of high-energy radiation with short wavelengths. Some portion of this is temporarily absorbed by the land and oceans, where it does work moving electrons. This work consumes energy, so a significant portion of this radiation that is subsequently re-emitted by the Earth is lower-energy, longer-wavelength infrared radiation. As this re-emitted radiation travels through the atmosphere on its way back to space, some of it is absorbed by CO_2 molecules and then redirected back toward the Earth. If you are skeptical of this, you are skeptical of the last 120 years of particle physics. All else equal, the more CO_2 molecules we have in the atmosphere, the hotter it gets.

The key question is how much hotter. In a simplified model of the planet in which I posit no complexities created by things like water vapor, convection, clouds, trees, polar ice caps, and so on, it is pretty straightforward to estimate. But here's the problem: The Earth is nothing like that planet. Any change, including pumping out more CO_2, kicks off an incredibly complicated set of feedback effects. Some of these will tend to magnify the greenhouse-warming impact, and others will tend to reduce it. Famously, as the atmosphere heats up, polar ice caps tend to melt; this in turn causes further heating. On the other hand, more CO_2 should lead to faster plant growth; this pulls CO_2 out of the atmosphere and therefore reduces warming. The list of such potential effects is very long, and many of these feedback effects interact with one another. This is what makes forecasting the climate an excruciatingly difficult scientific problem. It is also why we should be very wary of any silver-bullet alternative theories (such as the one involving variations in solar radiation) that claim to account for the recent run-up in global temperatures.

The most important scientific debate is really about these feedback effects. Feedbacks are not merely details to be cleaned up in a picture that is fairly clear. The base impact of a doubling of CO_2 in the atmosphere with no feedback effects is on the order of 1°C, while the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) consensus estimate of the impact of doubling CO_2 is about 3°C. The feedback effects dominate the prediction. As we've seen, however, feedback effects run in both directions. Feedback could easily dampen the net impact so it ends up being less than 1°C. In fact, the raw relationship between temperature increases and CO_2 over the past century supports that idea.

Over the past several decades, teams in multiple countries have launched ongoing projects to develop large computer models that simulate the behavior of the global climate in order to account for feedback effects. While these models are complex, they are still extremely simplistic as compared with the actual phenomenon of global climate. Models have successfully replicated historical climates, but no model has ever demonstrated that it can accurately predict the climate impact of CO_2 emissions over a period of many years or decades.

Climate models generate useful projections for us to consider, but the reality is that nobody knows with meaningful precision how much warming we will experience under any emissions scenario. Global warming is a real risk, but its impact over the next century could plausibly range from negligible to severe.

HOW BIG A DEAL?

Global warming, of course, has been a partisan issue rather than a purely scientific discussion for a long time, and conservatives have painted themselves into a corner. Based on the reasonable expectation that admitting a problem would lead to a huge government power grab, those conservatives with access to the biggest megaphones have used scientific uncertainty to avoid the issue. That game is just about up, and they suddenly find themselves walking unprepared into the middle of a sophisticated scientific and economic conversation about how to deal with the problem. While some conservative think tanks have considered these issues seriously for some time, the public discussion has been conducted up

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until now largely among various liberal factions and has turned into a technical debate about the most efficient tax scheme for reducing carbon emissions.

Prior engagement on the topic would have enabled conservatives to have made more persuasively the case that a policy of rapid, aggressive emissions abatement would be a terrible idea. Even if we assume that current climate models are perfectly accurate, and we further ignore the gigantic practical problem that China and India—the dominant emitters of the 21st century—will almost certainly not go along, the core issue remains that the benefits are not remotely worth the costs.

The current IPCC consensus forecast is that, under fairly reasonable assumptions for world population and economic growth, global temperatures will rise by 2.8°C by the year 2100. According to a decades-long modeling project by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and Department of Economics, this amount of warming should result in zero to very mild net average global economic costs through 2100. Importantly, these models predict large negative impacts in poorer areas closer to the equator. Russia, Canada, and much of Europe are projected to benefit. The U.S. and China are projected to experience roughly break-even net impacts.

Only if temperatures continued to grow well beyond this level would truly costly net-negative U.S. and global impacts begin to be felt in the 22nd and 23rd centuries. According to the most recent IPCC Summary for Policymakers, a 4°C increase in temperatures would cause total economic losses of 1 to 5 percent of global GDP. That's a lot of money, but it's hardly Armageddon.

COMPETING SCENARIOS

The most frequently discussed methods for forcing the reduction of carbon emissions, and thereby reducing projected global warming, involve a direct or indirect tax on carbon. The theory is that we will sacrifice wealth today by forcing the economy to make less efficient use of resources, but in return enjoy future benefits because we avoid some of the costs that would have been created by ongoing global warming. The problem for the advocates of rapid reduction of carbon emissions is that the projected benefit is not the avoidance of global destruction, but rather the avoidance of costs of about 3 percent of global GDP—and even this benefit will be enjoyed only hundreds of years in the future, by a much wealthier world. These benefits, even if we accepted them as certain, would justify only very mild abatement of carbon emissions today, which can much more productively be accomplished by technological improvements than by a new worldwide tax regime.

Precisely because this broad case for immediate, aggressive abatement of carbon emissions doesn't withstand scrutiny, advocates have now begun to focus on the possibility of more specific climate catastrophes, such as the shutdown of the Gulf Stream or the loss of the Greenland Ice Sheet. If we were to accept that any one of these events was imminent, it would be rational to make huge sacrifices right now in a last-ditch effort to avoid it or soften its impact.

Fortunately, no mainstream science makes any such prediction of impending disaster; worry about them amounts to no more than informed speculation. The current IPCC report is explicit about this when it says: "Abrupt climate changes, such as the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, rapid loss of the Greenland Ice Sheet, or large-scale changes in ocean circulation systems, are not considered likely to occur in the 21st century, based on currently available model results." That said, the same humility that leads us to a sensible skepticism about the ability of climate models to predict the temperature centuries into the future must also logically lead us to accept that some of these more extreme negative scenarios are not impossible. It is not a "scientific fact" that any of these things will occur; it is not even a quantifiable probability; but there is some currently unquantifiable but (crudely speaking) very low chance that one of these will happen.

Advocates have developed rationales for rapid carbon abatement that are really more or less sophisticated restatements of the idea that these downside risks are so bad that we should pay almost any price to avoid almost any chance of their occurrence. This concept has been called, somewhat grandiosely, the Precautionary Principle. Once you get past all of the table-pounding, this is the crux of the argument for emissions abatement. It is an emotionally appealing political position, as it is easy to argue that we should avoid some consumption now to head off even a low-odds possibility of a disaster.

But this is to get lost in the world of single-issue advocates and become myopic about risk. We face lots of other unquantifiable threats of at least comparable realism and severity. A regional nuclear war in Central Asia, a global pandemic triggered by a modified version of the HIV virus, or a rogue state weaponizing genetic-engineering technology all come immediately to mind. Any of these could kill hundreds of millions of people. Scare stories are meant to be frightening, but we shouldn't become paralyzed by them.

THE SMART WAY

In the face of massive uncertainty on multiple fronts, the best strategy is almost always to hedge your bets and keep your options open. Wealth and technology are raw materials for options. The loss of economic and technological development that would be required to eliminate literally all theorized climate-change risk would cripple our ability to deal with virtually every other foreseeable and unforeseeable risk, not to mention our ability to lead productive and interesting lives in the meantime. The Precautionary Principle is a bottomless well of anxieties, but our resources are finite. It's possible to buy so much flood insurance that you can't afford fire insurance.

In fact, a much more sensible strategy to deal with climate risk would emphasize technology rather than taxes. A science-based approach would hedge by providing support for prediction, mitigation, and adaptation technologies.

Prediction. We should start with the development of better climate-prediction tools. The climate-modeling community has made real progress, but needs to mature rapidly if we are to use climate models as the basis for trillion-dollar decisions. Today, climate modeling shows all the classic symptoms of poor supervision of smart analysts, including: excessive analytical complexity driven by researcher interest rather than focus on task-at-hand; lack of rigorous validation studies; software-engineering quality standards more appropriate for exploratory research than for reliable predictions; lack of transparent data standards; and an over-weighting of investment in analysis, as opposed to data collection and validation. The federal government should redirect funding in this area to develop a better software-modeling process, in combination with

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networks of physical sensors that can provide early-warning systems for the most plausible of the potential catastrophic climate scenarios.

Mitigation. Our economy is on a long-term trajectory of decarbonization as it becomes less energy-intensive and as the relative prices of alternative energy sources continue to drop compared with the price of fossil fuels. Accelerating this process is valuable for many reasons other than those involving climate change. Development of tactical technologies, such as carbon sequestration and cleaner-burning engines, would enable us to invent lower-emissions production facilities, automobiles, and so forth in the U.S., and export this technology to countries like China and India, where it would make the biggest difference (as these countries build up basic infrastructure). Using U.S. or European technology to increase the energy-conversion efficiency of coal-fired Chinese power plants as they come on line over the next few decades is a decidedly non-sexy measure; but it's probably the single most important action we can take to reduce carbon emissions over the next century.

Adaptation. Adaptation should take center stage, as it is by far the most cost-effective means of addressing climate risk. We can reduce the climate impact of carbon that is emitted, often using such simple techniques as planting more trees or using more reflective paint. Prosaic efforts—such as developing strains of crops that grow better in slightly warmer temperatures, better buttresses for buildings, and more intelligent zoning codes for coastal areas—can dramatically reduce losses from temperature swings, hurricanes, and floods today, and also reduce vulnerability to any potential future problems caused by climate change.

The government can catalyze improvements in the relevant technologies, but it's absolutely essential that we avoid turning this into yet another huge corporate-welfare program: The last thing we need is a repeat of shale-oil subsidies to Exxon or the multi-billion-dollar fiasco of funding the development of a totally uneconomic wind turbine by Boeing. The agency for funding any government-sponsored research should be explicitly modeled on the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)—an agency with highly intelligent staff, who have wide flexibility in providing small grants for demonstrated progress in closing crucial technological gaps. We also need to place a strong emphasis on large prizes for accomplishing measurable and audacious goals. The British entrepreneur Richard Branson has offered a $25 million prize to anyone who demonstrates a device that removes carbon from the atmosphere; what if the U.S. government upped the ante to $1 billion and pledged to make any resulting technology freely available to the world? That would hold the potential for solving any global-warming problem that might develop—for a one-time cost of less than 0.01 percent of U.S. GDP.

The incremental cost of this approach could be single-digit billions per year, possibly with partially offsetting spin-off benefits. DARPA's total annual budget is about $3 billion, and—unlike Al Gore—it really did invent the Internet (original name: ARPANET). In fact, it's important that the honeypot be kept small enough, and be doled out in small enough increments, that it's not worthwhile for either Congress or Fortune 100 companies to try to direct the spending politically.

HOT POLITICS OF GLOBAL WARMING

Global warming is a manageable risk, not an existential crisis, and we should get on with the job of managing it. Conservatives should propose policies that are appropriately optimistic, science-based, and low-cost. This should be an attractive political program: It is an often-caricatured, but very healthy, reality that Americans usually respond well to the conversion of political issues into technical problems. After all, we're very good at solving the latter.

It sometimes feels as if there is unstoppable momentum behind a quasi-messianic program of aggressive emissions reductions. In this kind of debate, however, appearances can be deceiving. As usual, Tocqueville put it best. He described in eerily accurate, if not completely flattering, terms how the American people react to radical plans put forth by a revolutionary leader: "They do not combat him energetically, they sometimes even applaud him. To his impetuosity they secretly oppose their inertia; to his revolutionary instincts, their conservative instincts; their homebody tastes to his adventurous passions; their good sense to the leaps of his genius; to his poetry, their prose. He arouses them for a moment with a thousand efforts, but soon after they get away from him, and, as if dragged down by their own weight, they fall back."

> Global warming is a manageable risk, not an existential crisis, and we should get on with the job of managing it.

No matter how often activists feel as if they'd won all the debates in think-tank meetings, editorial pages, and faculty lounges, it is still going to be a tough battle to convince 51 percent of voters to make huge sacrifices based on the evidence that we have now. After all, Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates has estimated that implementing even the limited emissions abatement envisioned for the U.S. under the proposed Kyoto Protocol would cost the average U.S. family about $225 per month. Ongoing polling conducted by researchers at MIT indicates that the median U.S. family would be willing to pay $21 per month to "solve global warming." That's quite a bid-ask spread.

The electorate, like all markets, is pretty unsentimental in pursuing its own interests. This drives the activists crazy, and if conservatives keep their cool, will ultimately lead the activists to commit serious blunders that alienate public opinion. They are already starting to attack the consensus science of the IPCC as too timid because it does not support predictions of imminent global catastrophe.

We also shouldn't forget that, in national politics, global warming remains a tactical issue. American presidential elections almost always turn on the questions of war and the economy. Unless Al Gore wins the Democratic nomination, in which case

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an all-out effort to demonstrate the folly of his proposals will presumably be a centerpiece of the campaign, 2008 is unlikely to be an exception. A CBS poll in March asked adults the open-ended question of "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?" Not surprisingly, Iraq was named first and the economy second. Global warming did not even break 3 percent.

A key political question is therefore which side could more effectively use its position on carbon taxes to peel off 1 percent of relevant votes from the opposing coalition. In a presidential election the key attributes of these targeted voters are that they are persuadable—that they could conceivably change their votes—and that they are in battleground states. It seems pretty easy to find the names and addresses for lots of people who are potentially persuadable because they have a huge perceived loss and no more than an average benefit from a carbon tax. You could start with every member of the Teamsters and the UAW. Together they represent almost 2 million people, not counting dependents. Now try to find people on the other end. I guess you could look for owners of homes within a mile of the beach, and even that's not an obvious winner.

The contemporary battleground for U.S. presidential elections is consistently the Midwest. The states with at least ten electoral votes and a 2004 presidential-election margin of less than 5 points are Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Imagine what a competent phone-bank and direct-mail effort could do in these states by contacting employees in carbon-sensitive industries (such as auto manufacturing and truck transport) with some version of this message: "My opponent wants you to pay thousands of dollars per year, and maybe lose your job, to help avoid a problem that might occur in sub-Saharan Africa a hundred years from now. I oppose this policy. I think we should invest in American technology and ingenuity to protect ourselves from any climate risk that might threaten us."

Tellingly, the most obvious examples of persuadable voters are old-line industrial-union members alienated by an elite policy that imposes huge penalties on them. They used to be called Reagan Democrats.

This is why the spectacle of Al Gore and assorted members of the Hollywood and political smart set soulfully asking all of us how we're ready to change our lives—while themselves living in 20,000-square-foot houses and traveling on private jets—is so politically resonant. Just as with the original limousine liberals, it's not the hypocrisy per se that rankles the persuadable voters, as much as the observation that those who advocate this policy don't really have to feel its effects. Gore doesn't seem to get that the response that he buys carbon offsets only adds fuel to the fire. It emphasizes that $225 per month, or $2,250 per month, of extra expense to Al Gore means that some digits in the monthly statements sent to him by his private banker are slightly different. For a typical Teamsters or UAW member, $225 per month is the cost of a new car.

Global warming can feel like a loser political issue to conservatives—one in which the only objective is to minimize both political and economic damage. But by getting past denial and taking a science-based approach to the issue, a clever candidate could take a principled stand that pays major tactical dividends. Global warming can be the first wedge issue of the 21st century. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY

How I Rethought Immigration

One man's confessions

DAVID FRUM

THE last time America debated amnesty for illegal aliens, I was on the other side. The year was 1986. I was a student at law school and an occasional contributor to this magazine. I believed then that immigration was a great thing, the more the better. I believed that illegal immigration resulted from government failure to set immigration quotas high enough to meet the economy's needs. And I believed that amnesty constituted a reasonable and, really, the only possible response to the problem.

Where did I get these beliefs? How did I lose them?

Here's my story. Maybe it reminds you of your own.

OPEN TO THE FUTURE . . .

How could you not enthuse over immigration if you were born in the Toronto of four decades ago?

A story goes that a visiting British newspaperman passed through town to give some lectures on the world war just ended. "Where are you staying?" asked the hostess. "I rented a room on Jarvis Street," the journalist answered. The hostess was shocked, Jarvis Street then being the local skid row. "Jarvis Street isn't a very good address," she said. "Madam, Toronto isn't a very good address."

Toronto in 1950 had been a grim provincial town whose leading idea of fun was selling dubious mining shares to gullible investors. ("Toronto the Good" fiercely policed liquor and obscenity, but took a rather more permissive attitude to the notorious local stock exchange.) But there was one thing Toronto did offer, and in abundance: security. Peace, order, good government—the Canadian promise. And after the tumult of depression and war, peace, order, and good government were just what hundreds of thousands of displaced Poles, Greeks, Italians, Chinese, Hungarians, Jews, Vietnamese, Ukrainians desperately craved.

Between 1950 and 1970 the population of Toronto increased significantly. The city's increase in wealth and sophistication was even more substantial. I was born in 1960, just old enough to remember the old town—young enough to be dazzled by the new immigrant-welcoming metropolis. Skyscrapers tinted in gold soared over sidewalk cafés. A hungry student with $10 in his pocket could take his choice from Hungarian schnitzel or Hong Kong dim sum, Jamaican pasties or Punjabi curry. In two

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hours' walk along Bloor Street, you could pass from Greece to Poland, with Korea, the Philippines, and half a dozen countries in between, without crime, strife, or any serious ethnic tension. To a great extent, you still can.

As I look back on it now, I am amazed at how unamazing I found this great civic achievement. Then again, I'd grown up thinking that there could be nothing more easy and natural than migration back and forth across borders. My father's family had fled bullying and boycotts in Poland and settled in Canada in 1930. One of my paternal grandfather's brothers and one of his sisters migrated to Palestine at the same time. All the rest—his father, mother, and four brothers—were murdered. One brother survived the camps and found refuge in Israel after World War II.

My mother's family came from the border town of Niagara Falls. My grandmother had grown up in Niagara Falls, N.Y.; my grandfather, in Niagara Falls, Ont. They married in 1935, and since my grandfather's business lay on the Canadian side of the line, they made their home in the north.

My grandmother lived in Canada for the next seven decades on a U.S. passport. For many years, she taught English literature at a high school in Niagara Falls, N.Y. As a boy, I'd often drive with her across the Rainbow Bridge to her class. The border guards would greet us as we pulled up in her huge Oldsmobile: "Good morning Mrs. Rosberg, may I see some identification, please?"

Of my grandmother's three children, the eldest (my mother) was born American and naturalized Canadian. The youngest (my uncle) was born Canadian and naturalized American. Only the middle child (my aunt) stayed Canadian all the way through.

Nor was this experience anomalous. My wife's grandfather, for example, was an American born in upstate New York. Wanting to enter World War I before his country did, he joined the Canadian Army, rose through the ranks, and ended up founding and commanding the Canadian Armoured Corps.

My younger self perceived these crossings of the 49th parallel not as a unique legacy of a common continental culture, but as an example for how the rest of the world should and could live. As a free marketer, I believed in the free movement of goods and capital across international borders. Why not people too? The great free-market intellectual revolution of the 1970s had hit my generation like an avalanche. Of course we knew that markets are human institutions, which function or fail depending on the laws that govern them. Of course we knew that human behavior was guided as much by culture and habit as by economic rationality. We knew those things—but we did not think about them very much.

. . . BUT OPEN TO EVIDENCE

Three years after Ronald Reagan signed the 1986 amnesty, I was married, living in Brooklyn, and working for the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. If Toronto prejudiced me in favor of open borders, David Dinkins's New York seemed to seal the case. America's greatest city seemed to be gasping—and immigration seemed to be the one breath of life that sustained it. From the Korean greengrocers who sold fresh produce in neighborhoods from which grocery chains had long fled, to the Polish painters imported to replaster ornamental ceilings, to the young Irish people gentrifying warehouses in Brooklyn, to the Indian MBAs on the trading floors of the investment banks—immigrants seemed to feel a confidence in the future of the city shared by few of the native-born. When Afrocentric agitators picketed Korean shops to protest the owners' refusal to shrug off shoplifting, whose side would any decent person take?

So what happened? The short answer is: It's all Bob Bartley's fault. The legendarily pro-open-borders editor of the *Journal* liked to give his staffers "beats." Bartley assigned me the income-inequality debate. From 1989 to 1991, some of the most dramatic and exhilarating years of the 20th century, while my colleagues covered wars and revolutions, I was trudging my way through reports from Brookings and AEI on what exactly was happening to the American middle class. Always the glamour jobs!

It was customary to draw a sharp line dividing (bad) illegal immigration from (good) legal immigration. But the more closely you studied the issue, the more problematic that line became.

And yet, in their way, those studies and reports contained information as unexpected, startling, and radical as anything coming out of Eastern Europe. I had never appreciated the sheer scale of the immigration surge: almost 2 million legal entries in 1991—close to half the number of births that year—plus who knew how many illegals. And, in stark contradiction to all my preconceptions about immigration, the immigrants who had arrived in the United States since 1970 were not doing very well. They were arriving poor, and they were staying poor for decades. Ominous warning signs were gathering that their children would stay poor too.

It was customary to draw a sharp line dividing (bad) illegal immigration from (good) legal immigration. But the more closely you studied the issue, the more problematic that line became. "Illegal" immigration was not "illegal" in the same way that, say, illegal drugs were. Since the 1970s, the U.S. government had tacitly allowed illegal immigrants a quasi-protected status. In 1979, the Immigration Service ended its long policy of raiding residences in search of illegals. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled that children present in the country illegally nonetheless possessed a constitutional right to a free public education. The promises of effective enforcement that accompanied

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the 1986 amnesty were never honored. I began to think that it made more sense to think of immigration policy as a whole, with a tacitly accepted "illegality" just as much a part of the structure as the genius visas for aliens of extraordinary ability. Immigrants could start legal (by entering on, say, a temporary visa), become illegal (by overstaying their visa), and then legalize themselves again (by marriage or sponsorship or amnesty).

I also began to learn that you could hardly name a social problem without discovering that immigration was aggravating it to the point of unsolvability.

Health insurance? Immigrants accounted for about one-quarter of the uninsured in the early 1990s, and about one-third of the increase in the uninsured population at that time.

Social spending? The Urban Institute estimated in 1994 that educating the children of illegal aliens cost the State of California almost $1.5 billion per year.

Wage pressure on the less-skilled? The wages of less-skilled Americans had come under ferocious pressure since 1970. How could you even begin to think about this issue without recognizing the huge immigration-driven increase in the supply of unskilled labor over the same period?

Competitiveness? How could the U.S. remain the world's most productive nation while simultaneously remixing its population to increase dramatically the proportion of poorly educated people within it?

A 1997 study by the National Academy of Sciences found virtually zero net benefit to the U.S. economy from immigration. Immigration yielded benefits, true—but also costs in the form of lower wages and higher social-welfare burdens. Balance costs and benefits against each other, as a rational policymaker should, and you arrived at a favorable balance of $10 billion, less than a tenth of a percentage point in a $12 trillion economy.

And this favorable balance was composed in a way that would normally disturb a rational policymaker: The largest share of the benefits went to the immigrants themselves, and almost all of the rest to people at the top of society. Almost all of the costs were borne by people at the bottom.

As it happened, I myself was one of those winners. My green card came through in 1996. And by education and income, I belonged to the economic elite who profited so handsomely from the 1990s boom. Years later, my elder daughter would ask me to explain why immigration was so controversial. I tried to describe the debate as fairly as I could, explaining who was helped and who was injured. She absorbed my description, and then asked: "So Daddy, why are *we* against it?"

Of course I wasn't *against* it, not exactly. The right kind of immigration policy—one that opened the borders of nations such as the U.S., Canada, and Australia to moderate numbers of newcomers who knew the language, obeyed the law, shared national values, possessed useful skills, and paid more in taxes than they consumed in services—such an immigration seemed to me then and seems to me still a very good thing.

SCENES FROM THE CLASS STRUGGLE

As a conservative, I had spent much of my life gleefully pointing out how liberalism repackaged selfish special interests as "compassion": schools run for the benefit of unionized teachers, not students; welfare that served administrators rather than the poor; trade protections that enriched favored industries at the expense of the general public. But now, when I discussed immigration with my friends and fellow conservatives, I heard reasoning that might have embarrassed the crudest Tammany Hall pork-barreler.

At an elegant book party on a Connecticut lawn, one acquaintance smilingly explained her point of view: "How else will I get my flower beds done?"

Lord knows, I heard a lot of self-interest dressed up as public policy during my years as an editorial-page editor. But the flacks and lobbyists who pressed their clients' cases at least accepted some obligation to frame a convincing argument that what was good (for example) for the plastic-pail industry was good for America. With immigration, somehow the rules were different.

A careless economic calculus, a poorly considered political gamble, and self-righteous moral grandstanding have together pushed the president to the worst domestic policy error of his presidency.

The class divide was widening in 1990s America; anybody with eyes could see that. Yet most of the ideas you heard for addressing this problem—trade protection, income redistribution—offered a cure worse than the disease. And immigration was worsening the inequality problem without offering any significant social benefit. The case for reform seemed more than overwhelming. It seemed compulsory. On the other hand, the issue often seemed to bring out the worst on the pro-reform side as well. In the late 1980s, a group of self-described "paleoconservatives" had congealed around the magazine *Chronicles*. For them, the great issue was not incomes, but race. They mixed their ferocious hostility to immigration with savage denunciations of the civil-rights movement of the 1960s—and, for that matter, the Union cause in the 1860s.

The just-hatched Internet then started to sprout websites devoted entirely to the immigration issue. All too often, the immigration reformers decided to perceive no-enemies-to-the-racialist-right. They might be exclusionist at the borders of the nation; at their own port of entry, however, they lifted their lamp to welcome people who wanted to argue the intellectual inferi-

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ority of African Americans, or compared federal law-enforcement agents to the Gestapo, or insisted the Jews had brought the Holocaust upon themselves, or despised America's Spanish-speaking neighbors as inferiors and enemies, or dined with David Duke. Has ever a cause been worse served by its alleged advocates? The immigration debate all too often reminded me of the description of the English Civil War in *1066 and All That*: a battle between the Wrong but Wromantic and the Right but Repulsive.

Immigration was the greatest ideological qualm I had to overcome when I went to work for President George W. Bush. Who knew? Perhaps I might even be able to do some small measure of good. I knew the president's own convictions leaned toward open borders. But circumstances often push presidents in very different directions from those in which they at first intend to go.

And so it seemed to be happening in September 2001, when Vicente Fox paid his state visit to his great friend Jorge. The Mexican position on immigration was so aggressive, intransigent, and one-sided as to wreck negotiations before they could even begin. Days later, foreign terrorists attacked the World Trade Center. Now, I thought, change would have to come. The attacks revealed immigration not just as a crucial economic and social issue, but also as vital to national security. The 9/11 hijackers would have been caught a dozen times over by a society that enforced its immigration rules. Soon afterward, Americans were reading about bombings in Spain, murders in Amsterdam, and car burnings in Paris.

You might think that a trauma like 9/11 would have prompted a major rethink of its immigration policies by the Bush administration. You would think wrong. While enforcement was tightened in certain concentrated areas, elsewhere it actually relaxed. Immigration from the Middle East reached an all-time peak in 2005. Altogether, an estimated 8 million people settled in the U.S. in the first six years of the Bush administration, at least half of them illegally. In 2004, 2006, and now again in 2007, the president has attempted to push through legalization and guest-worker programs.

Neither the president nor his inner circle has ever cared to hear from dissenters on this issue. A hasty and careless economic calculus, a poorly considered political gamble, and self-righteous moral grandstanding have together pushed the president to the worst domestic political and policy error of his presidency.

It seems impossible that the immigration bill can succeed: A large majority of the American people claim to be following the immigration debate closely, and that majority opposes the immigration plan by a three-to-one majority. And when the bill collapses, it will take what little remains of the president's political capital with it. Did I say capital? No, that has long since been spent. It is his credit that he is now exhausting.

Out of this disaster, however, comes some hope. The national debate triggered by the Senate's catastrophic reform has accelerated the great rethinking of immigration on the part of many millions of Americans. The backroom deal that produced this latest law epitomized decades of collusion between the two parties to suppress open discussion of this vital issue. This time, at last, the collusion failed. Democracy has erupted. I'm ready to make my voice heard. How about you? **NR**

■ CONSERVATISM

A Farewell to Culture Wars

Advice to conservatives from a 'well-wishing outsider'

BRINK LINDSEY

On April 5, 2007, the Walt Disney Company announced that it would allow same-sex couples to hold "Fairy Tale Weddings" at its theme parks and on its cruises. These high-end wedding packages, which can run into the tens of thousands of dollars, offer such amenities as public ceremonies at the parks' marriage pavilions, Disney cartoon characters at the reception, and horse-drawn glass-carriage rides. According to the company website, "your personal 'fairy godplanner' grants your every wish and ensures your wedding day is everything you have always dreamt it would be." Disney spokesman Donn Walker explained that the decision to offer gay ceremonies was "consistent with our policy of creating a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for all of our guests."

It's been increasingly clear for years now, but this little story encapsulates perfectly how befuddling to ideologues of all persuasions our country has become. What, to any self-respecting anti-corporate leftist, could present a more appalling spectacle than lavish kitschfests at the Ground Zero of consumerism run amok? What, at the same time, could more reliably provoke teeth-gnashing among social conservatives than the decision by an American icon of family values to throw in with the gay-rights agenda?

The time has come to declare the surprise ending of a decades-long ideological struggle. The culture wars are over, and capitalism won. The question now is: Will the Left or the Right be the first to figure this out? The answer may well determine the future balance of political power.

Conservatives, for their part, are well aware of their own ideological consternation. The blunders, betrayals, and disappointments of the late Republican Congress and now-moribund Bush administration have brought the point home beyond serious dispute. Compounding conservatives' malaise is the absence of any obvious "movement" candidate among the leading contenders for the '08 Republican presidential nomination.

David Frum got to the nub of the matter in a recent diagnosis of the Republican funk. "And just as the Grand Old Party of Lincoln and Grant eventually ran out of Civil War generals to nominate to the presidency, so perhaps time has run out for the old Nixon-Reagan coalition that came together to vote against the social upheavals of the 1960s and the 1970s," he wrote. "The

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1960s and 1970s were, after all, a very, very long time ago."

That is exactly right. After decades of wrenching adjustment, American society has now moved past the cultural convulsions that propelled the conservative movement to power. If that movement is once again to play a constructive role in shaping the country's future—if it is to regain its lost vigor and clarity of purpose—it will need to redefine itself in light of where the country stands today.

THE POST-WAR SOAR

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see the *Sturm und Drang* of the '60s and '70s as an unanticipated consequence of economic progress. In the years after World War II, capitalism's immense productive energies transformed the United States into something entirely new under the sun. Poverty and subjection to the vagaries of nature were the sad lot of most people, at most points in history. As the post-war boom took off, however, the unprecedented development of technology and organization made America the first society in human history in which most people could take satisfaction of their basic material needs more or less for granted.

The story of post-war America is thus the story of adaptation to fundamentally new social realities, particularly mass affluence. Time-honored practices that had developed during the long reign of scarcity were now in need of serious revision or even wholesale abandonment. At the same time, new values and priorities began to assert themselves. Wrenching cultural conflict was unavoidable.

The civil rights movement, feminism, the sexual revolution—all were carried forward by the swift currents of economic development. The heroic struggle against Jim Crow could not have occurred without the prior mechanization of agriculture, especially cotton picking, that drove blacks off the farm and into cities and towns where they could be mobilized into collective action. And the success of that struggle was aided immeasurably by one new technology in particular—television—which brought blacks' plight into the living rooms of white Americans and stung their sleeping consciences.

At the same time, the old sexual division of labor—with a "man's world" of paid work and a female sphere of domesticity—began to give way as industrialization outsourced more and more housework to the market or mechanized that work with home appliances. Under such circumstances, the feminist campaign for equal rights in the workplace, just like the earlier campaign for equal rights in the voting booth, was all but inevitable. Meanwhile, the age-old injunction against premarital sex was bound to weaken as the chief practical argument in its favor—avoiding the risks of disease and pregnancy—was countered by antibiotics and convenient, effective birth control.

The coming of mass prosperity thus created powerful momentum for sweeping changes in American life. Those changes were already well underway during the supposedly quiescent '50s. But over the course of the decade that followed, what had begun as a process of measured, incremental, essentially *conservative* adaptation turned into something very different—a radical assault on all traditions, all authority, and all constraints. A tendency toward moral absolutism engendered by the civil-rights movement, an openness to extreme experience stoked by the new drug culture, the Dionysian energy of rock music, the coming of age of the first generation in human history raised in mass affluence, and a faraway war fought with conscripts—all these elements combined to launch the great Aquarian rebellion. In its two distinct but overlapping aspects, the New Left on one hand and the counterculture on the other, this utopian, romantic uprising sought the revolutionary overthrow of, well, pretty much everything.

The revolution never materialized, of course, but the spirit of Aquarius exerted a heavy influence on both the political Left and the broader culture. It was in response to the antinomian excesses of that influence that the modern conservative movement found its footing and began its rise to political power.

AQUARIAN WRECKAGE, CONSERVATIVE TRIUMPH

The post-war conservative synthesis—free-market economics, social conservatism, and a hawkish foreign policy—had emerged in the 1950s, most famously with the establishment of NATIONAL REVIEW. But until the social chaos of the '60s, the movement was strictly a rearguard action, "stand[ing] athwart history, yelling Stop." On the eve of the chaos, conservatism's greatest success had been the Goldwater candidacy—which ended in a defeat of historic proportions. Between that debacle and the next election, however, the runaway radicalism of Aquarius wrecked the reigning liberal consensus and allied conservatives with the centrist "Silent Majority."

During the 1970s, riots in the streets subsided, but a broader breakdown in social order proceeded apace. Crime rates exploded: Between 1965 and 1980, the murder rate doubled, while the rates for aggravated assaults and robberies jumped 165 percent and 244 percent, respectively. Divorces skyrocketed, from 480,000 in 1965 to over a million a decade later. The illegitimacy rate for black births, already a grim 22 percent as early as 1960, climbed to 55 percent by 1979. In the face of such disturbing trends, social conservatives continued to gain both intellectual and political momentum.

The '70s also broadened the appeal of the other two elements of the conservative synthesis: free markets at home and a muscular defense of American interests abroad. The woes of stagflation delegitimized managerial liberalism's vision of an ever-expanding welfare and regulatory state, thereby opening the way for far-reaching economic deregulation. And inflation-induced tax-bracket creep greatly expanded the constituency for cutting taxes and reining in the size of government. Meanwhile, South Vietnam's fall, Soviet adventurism culminating in Afghanistan, and the Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage crisis all combined to accentuate U.S. fecklessness on the world stage—and gave new credibility to those who unabashedly embraced patriotism and longed for a reassertion of American power.

What followed was a string of conservative political triumphs—most important, the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994. And beyond the obvious, partisan victories, conservatives succeeded in the less appreciated but crucial task of remaking their opposition. Shaken by repeated electoral rejection, "neoliberals" and "New Democrats" made their peace with much of the Reagan economic program, embraced a tougher stance on crime, and generally distanced themselves from left-wing identity politics.

FREEDOM'S CONSEQUENCES

By the 1990s, after the wild overshooting of the Aquarian Left had been checked by the rise of the Right, American society had achieved a reasonably successful adjustment to the new possibilities and perils of mass prosperity. Capitalism, the ultimate source of

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all the upheavals, had been preserved. Indeed, limits on the free play of market forces were now considerably relaxed. The elimination of market-entry and price regulations, the slashing of tax rates, the continued lowering of trade barriers, and the collapse of private-sector union power rendered the American economy significantly more competitive, entrepreneurial, and globalized than prior to the '60s. And the resulting economic performance has been appropriately robust: a nearly quarter-century boom interrupted by only 18 months of recession, and a resurgence of productivity growth fed by spectacular advances in information technology.

The core middle-class values that underlie capitalism were likewise preserved. A strong work ethic and belief in personal responsibility, a continued commitment to the two-parent family as the best way of raising children, and a robust patriotism all survived the Aquarian challenge. Meanwhile, a host of hopeful indicators showed that the country's frayed social fabric was on the mend. The violent-crime rate fell 37 percent between 1992 and 2003; in that latter year, the divorce rate was at its lowest since 1971. Between 1994 and 2004, the number of families on public aid plunged from over 5 million to below 2 million.

Conservatives deserve considerable credit for restoring American society to relative health and vigor. Ironically, though, conservatism's successes ended up making the world safe for the secular, hedonistic values of Aquarius. Traditional attitudes about race, sex, the role of women in society, the permissible scope of artistic expression, and the nature of American cultural identity have all taken a beating. And what's more, many if not most conservatives today wouldn't undo the broad thrust of these changes even if they could. Depending on the issue, they range from moderately embarrassed to deeply ashamed of the Right's past associations with segregation, sexism, and prudery.

The culture wars slogged on through the Clinton and Bush administrations, and the polarization of red and blue has grown especially rancorous. But as I claimed at the outset of this piece, the only clear winner in these ongoing ideological conflicts has been capitalism. In particular, the logic of social development under capitalism seems to tend toward an exuberantly pluralistic pursuit of personal fulfillment through an ever-expanding division of labor. The accidental result of the standoff between Left and Right has been to allow that logic to operate now with unprecedented freedom of action.

A CONSERVATISM FOR TOMORROW

So what lessons can conservatives draw from this irony of recent history? As the country underwent dizzying and wrenching changes, conservatives defended much that was precious and useful from misguided assault. At the same time, though, they clung to specific practices and ways of thinking that were wrongheaded or at least outdated. How, in the future, can conservatives do a better job of distinguishing between baby and bathwater?

Let me lay my own cards on the table. I consider myself a libertarian, not a conservative. Yet for all my adult life until quite recently, I was a conservative sympathizer. In other words, although my own views differed from those of the mainstream Right in numerous and important respects, I nonetheless thought that conservative political success was, on balance, a good thing for the country.

I no longer think that. I was an enthusiastic supporter of Ronald Reagan, and I cast votes for both Bushes. But in my estimation, today's political Right has fallen badly out of alignment with the nation's best interests**.** The Bush administration's fiscal incontinence and federalization of education policy represent wrongheaded deviations from limited-government principles. Its foreign policy has been laid low by an overreaching hubris more typically associated with the Left. Meanwhile, throughout much of the conservative movement, the entirely appropriate concern with terrorism has fostered an entirely inappropriate lack of concern with constitutional restrictions on executive power—power that will not always remain in GOP hands. And I predict that, in 20 years' time if not sooner, the recent right-wing panics over gay marriage and Mexican immigration will look every bit as hidebound as the old fulminations against "satanic" rock 'n' roll.

My dissatisfaction with conservatism has even led me to advance the idea of a new political alliance between liberals and libertarians (see "A Lib-Lib Romance," December 31, 2006). But while engaging the Left is worth doing from a libertarian perspective, I certainly haven't given up on the Right. Indeed, the body of modern conservative thought offers much more promising materials for fashioning sound public policies than does its counterpart on the left. So allow this well-wishing outsider to offer a few thoughts about how conservatives might learn from the past generation of inconclusive culture wars.

The fundamental question for conservatives today is: What should they be seeking to conserve? The great American heritage of limited government, individual liberty, and free markets seems the only viable answer. As Peter Berkowitz has frequently and wisely noted, a truly American conservatism must have at the core of its concerns the defense and preservation of the *liberal* tradition. Which makes it a special kind of conservatism indeed: Its function is not to arrest change generally, or even slow it down, but rather to preserve the institutions that are both the chief source of change and the primary means through which we adapt to new conditions.

There is much in this mission to appeal to those of socially conservative temperament. The mission begins with protecting national security, a task that depends upon and helps sustain a healthy patriotism. Similarly fundamental is the defense of persons and property from criminal threats—and what could be more congenial to the party of order than upholding law and order? Meanwhile, an economic policy that steers away from punitive tax rates, heavy-handed regulation, and promiscuous redistribution is one that sides with the conservative virtues of diligence, prudence, trustworthiness, self-reliance, and enterprise.

Nevertheless, much of what has defined modern social conservatism—namely, political resistance to the incessant cultural change engendered by economic development—is not authentically conservative at all. It is reactionary.

In past decades conservatives imagined that only through maintaining specific social practices and arrangements could order and the values of a free society be preserved. Some thought, in the years before 1964, that disenfranchisement of blacks in the South was necessary to prevent catastrophic misrule. They were wrong. Others thought family life could not survive the exodus of women into the workforce. Wrong again. And others believed that only a revival of faith in Christianity could stave off social breakdown. Once more, with feeling—wrong.

It turns out that the core middle-class values that sustain a free society can survive—indeed, they can thrive—even as various his-

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torically contingent embellishments are dropped along the way. Look, for example, at blue-state New England today, where the most pronounced sort of cultural liberalism coexists with some of the highest incomes per head and lowest levels of social dysfunction (crime, divorce, illegitimacy, etc.) in the country.

The political failures of George W. Bush and congressional Republicans ensure that some kind of redefinition of conservatism will occur. Can the Right reconnect with the country's great liberal tradition, or will it veer even further into reactionary populism? Those of us who don't feel comfortable in either the red or blue camps will be watching with interest.

A REPLY BY RAMESH PONNURU

BRINK LINDSEY's reading of recent American history is by no means eccentric. The story that he recounts will be familiar to anyone who has read David Frum's book on the 1970s, or Francis Fukuyama's *The Great Disruption*, or any of David Brooks's writings on Bobos. Lindsey's evaluative stance toward that history is that of the second Austin Powers movie: We have come through the disruption with a renewed sense of freedom and responsibility.

While not a conservative himself, Lindsey thinks he can teach a lesson in what authentic conservatism really means. To some extent, he succeeds. It really is pointless to pine for the social order that existed prior to the late 1960s. Conservatives, of all people, should understand that cultures cannot be engineered to fit a template. Lindsey is right, as well, to observe that most conservatives would not want to go back if they could. The movement of women into the workforce has brought more benefits than costs, and is part of a shift toward an information economy that has made everyone richer and freed millions from drudgery.

Lindsey's narrative is also a useful corrective to the conservative fixation on the power of ideas. Feminism didn't happen when it did just because Betty Friedan wrote a book, which is why anti-feminist books can't undo it.

Lindsey's advice is less persuasive. He believes that "political resistance to the incessant cultural change engendered by economic development" has "defined" social conservatism. (He is, incidentally, mistaken on this point: It's not as though conservatives have opposed the rise of evangelical megachurches.) He thinks that conservatives need a guiding principle to determine which cultural changes need to be resisted, and he finds it in conservatism's historical defense of classic-liberal traditions and institutions. Frank Meyer would not have objected to that formulation. What's wrong with Lindsey's guiding principle isn't that it's a bad principle, but that it doesn't guide. It doesn't help us to distinguish baby from bathwater. We have to do that before we can put the principle into practice at all.

Lindsey predicts that before too long "the recent right-wing panics over gay marriage and Mexican immigration will look every bit as hidebound as the old fulminations against 'satanic' rock 'n' roll." Maybe they will. That won't necessarily mean that those "panics" were mistaken. It could mean that they were prescient. If your concern about same-sex marriage is precisely that it will have negative effects on our culture, then presumably one of those effects will be to render the culture inhospitable to your concern.

We should not, I think, take Lindsey to be saying that conservatives are wrong to oppose same-sex marriage and contemporary immigration patterns because they will inevitably fail. If he were saying that, then his advice would have no particular import for conservatives. Libertarians have fought quixotic crusades of their own. Libertarians, more than any non-libertarian faction of the Right, still object to the anti-discrimination laws that were part and parcel of the social transformation Lindsey chronicles.

Instead, I take Lindsey to be saying that conservatives are wrong to oppose same-sex marriage and continuous mass immigration because these things do not threaten the liberal order and, indeed, follow from it. (He is not explicit about that last point, but I think it is a fair inference.) Lindsey's view is a reasonable one, but reasonable people could view these matters differently.

A conservative might argue that a free society requires a certain level of cultural consensus that today's levels of immigration threaten. Or that limited government is possible only in a culture characterized by a high degree of familial stability, and that same-sex marriage, by weakening the association between marriage and child-rearing in our law and culture, would undermine that stability. Someone making this argument might note here that among the consequences of the sexual revolution that Lindsey does not discuss is that the government's family courts now tell millions of Americans how much time they can spend with their children. Or—to take up another example that Lindsey raises—a conservative might believe that a free society requires for its protection an executive branch capable of using wide discretion in combating terrorist threats to it.

It is easy to imagine the libertarian and liberal rejoinders to these claims. Some of them might be persuasive. But none of them would simply unfold from Lindsey's master principle like the stages of a proof in geometry. Nor would any of them follow from the fact that conservatives have been wrong about some (allegedly) similar matters in the past.

Rates of illegitimacy, abortion, crime, and divorce have all fallen, as Lindsey rightly notes. That fact should make—and, I think, has made—the tone of social conservatism less apocalyptic than it has been in the past. But if conservatives "deserve considerable credit" for bringing these rates down by resisting certain cultural changes, why should we not continue on resisting, in the hope of bringing the rates down further? Lindsey is too complacent about today's rates. (He is also too complacent about the Northeast, which is a poor illustration of his thesis about the social effects of economic dynamism.)

I have largely ignored Lindsey's suggestion that voters with his mix of views hold the key to the future. It is a preposterous bit of solipsism that recent political experience belies. Both parties have strategists that can read survey data, and that is why they have been moving in exactly the opposite direction, with Republicans emphasizing social conservatism rather than market economics, and Democrats emphasizing statist economics rather than social liberalism.

Lindsey's core recommendation does not, however, concern party politics. It is that conservatives follow "the logic of social development" in a capitalist society. If he had told us to follow the hand of Providence, his advice would have been at least as practical. **NR**

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HELP !!!!

Iowa Dims

Des Moines isn't wild about Hill,
A factoid that bugs Big Bad Bill.
She hasn't been getting the bird,
But scuttlebutt I've overheard
Implies she's beginning to cool—
Or, anyway, sprint like a mule.
Corn high as an elephant's eye
Is waving for Edwards. Bye-bye.

—W. H. von Dreele

"I don't care what anybody says—
this situation is getting out of hand."

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the long view

ROB LONG

Latham & Smith
1100 K Street Suite 350
Washington, DC 20037

10 June 2007

IN RE: SUBSTITUTION AND AMENDMENT TO CLINTON/CLINTON AGREEMENTS

Dear Steve:

Thanks very much for having such a frank and open conversation with me yesterday. As you know, my client is quite busy with her presidential campaign, and would appreciate the opportunity to resolve some of the more troubling issues involved in the Clinton/Clinton Agreements.

As I noted in our telephone conversation, in Section XXIV of Volume XL of the Clinton/Clinton Revised-Amended Basic Agreement, page 2987, we agreed that all campaign events, including campaign press events, including media interviews and general availability that your client, the former president, might do, would be coordinated by Senator Clinton's campaign staff. So it's obviously troubling and vexing to my client to discover that your client is, essentially, "freelancing." Your response to me on the telephone, that your client was "just doing what he does best," followed, you'll recall, by your suggestion that perhaps my client would prefer it if your client did "nothing at all," seems, on the face of it, to be a threat, or, at best, a bad-faith offer. This is precisely the kind of back-and-forth dealmaking that my client wishes to avoid. No one wants to relive 2003.

Steve, none of us wants to re-open the basic agreement. I think you'll recall those nine months of negotiation between our clients as difficult, complex, and in many ways sub-optimal. Our two clients wisely chose, in 1998, to communicate entirely through counsel in an effort to preserve the warm, loving nature of their very committed and traditional relationship. Frankly, it seems churlish and non-productive for your client, now that my client is running for president, to begin to push the limits of the deal.

Let's please talk soon. I think there are several avenues open to us to resolve this quickly, without revisiting the Amended Basic Agreement.

Sincerely,
Joe

PS: My client has instructed me to request that you inform your client that she will be conducting a casual, "at home"–style interview with the New York Times in the Chappaqua location between 2PM and 4PM EDT. Therefore, that location will be unavailable to your client during that period. In addition, as a provision of Section Aa of Volume IV of the Amended Basic Agreement—"Maintenance of Appearances Processes and Procedures"—she requires a "lighthearted" and "spontaneous" phone call from your client during the course of the interview.

Wachtell, Roth & Sullivan
900 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10024

12 June 2007

IN RE: CLINTON/CLINTON AMENDED BASIC AGREEMENT, SECTION XXIV, VOLUME XL

Dear Joe:

I am in receipt of your letter of 10 June.

Frankly, both I and my client, the twice-elected, hugely popular former president of the United States, are confused and baffled by this recent spate of what we consider to be non-productive argumentation from you and your client, the junior senator from New York.

As I know you and your client are aware, my client is a highly sought-after media personality, and as such is often called for thoughts and relevant quotes by quite literally thousands of news agencies, reporters, journalists, and pundits each day. To suggest that his public appearances are in some way detrimental to your client, or additionally that they violate the spirit of the Amended Basic Agreement, is unfair and unfounded.

As you yourself noted, our clients wisely chose, almost ten years ago, to channel their direct oral, written, telephonic, and electronic communication through counsel, so to propose such a literal interpretation of Section XXIV of the Amended Basic Agreement is quite simply unacceptable.

As I said repeatedly on the telephone to you, my client cannot be expected to "coordinate" his public appearances any more than he can be expected to "coordinate" his private actions, either in his home in Chappaqua, in Los Angeles with his good friend Ron Burkle, or at various spots around town with his many devoted followers.

Joe, we need to resolve this issue quickly. My client is genuinely concerned that your client has unreasonable expectations of the Amended Basic Agreement. He has asked me to remind your client that should her presidential campaign be successful, he has expressed his willingness for and interest in an "international" and "diplomatic" role within the federal government, which would allow him to pursue his passion for travel, and also maintain the physical distance that has contributed to their long, happy, warm, and deeply passionate relationship. To date, though, there has been no clear commitment from your client on that item. My client would certainly appreciate it if, by COB today, he could have a signed letter from your client indicating same to place in the Clinton/Clinton file(s).

As a sign of his good faith, my client has instructed me to request that you inform your client that he will not only make the "spontaneous" and "loving" telephone call during Sunday's interview, he will, if she wishes, do a "flying drop-by" in person, including one (1) or two (2) hugs, a dry cheek-style kiss, and a quick non-specific conversation with the implication being that your client and my client are cohabitating happily.

Please advise at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Steve

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Secret Confederate Treasure Discovered in Lost Civil War Shipwreck!

On January 26, 1861 the State of Louisiana seceded from the United States. Days later Rebel forces took control of the U.S. Mint in New Orleans, seizing a fortune in gold and silver bullion. Soon it became an official mint of the Confederate States of America.

For 150 years experts have known that the Confederacy produced silver half dollars dated 1861 and bearing the "O" of the New Orleans Mint. But no one knew what became of them. Only 4 were known to have been struck with the seal of the Confederacy, one of which sold at auction for $632,500.

"I Could Hardly Believe My Eyes" The team of Odyssey Marine Exploration made headlines worldwide when, after years of searching, they found the shipwreck of the SS *Republic*®. In 1865 the steamship went down in a hurricane, settling 1,700 feet beneath the Atlantic. Odyssey knew the SS *Republic* carried a king's ransom in U.S. gold coins from the Civil War era. But a secret awaited their discovery.

There among the glittering gold coins Odyssey brought up from the SS *Republic*: Silver half dollars bearing the date "1861" and the "O" mint mark of the old New Orleans Mint. "I could hardly believe my eyes," recalls Odyssey co-founder Greg Stemm. "We'd pored over the historical records. There was no reference to these coins in our research. We were surprised…and mystified".

Your Civil War treasure coin is certified and encapsulated by NGC and housed in a Deluxe Hardwood Presentation Case. The SS *Republic* DVD from National Geographic and a booklet detailing the amazing story of the New Orleans Mint at the beginning of the Civil War are also included.

The 1861-O half dollars were entrusted to the world's foremost experts. After months of painstaking study and research with government records, the weight of evidence was overwhelming. Numismatic Guaranty Corp (NGC), the nation's foremost independent rare coin conservation and grading service, was able to attribute and certify individual 1861-O silver half dollars found on the SS *Republic* to the Confederate States of America.

An Extraordinary Opportunity — If You Act Now. Authentic artifacts of the Civil War are highly coveted today. Many are locked away in museums such as the Smithsonian or are beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest. An original Confederate Army coat has sold for $70,000. A CSA flag brought a record $956,000. A Civil War canteen brings $5,500. Today, due to this history-making discovery, you can be one of the first to own an 1861-O silver half dollar, officially attributed to the Confederate States of America, from the fabulous treasure of the SS *Republic*. A limited number are being released to the public for just $1,497 (plus shipping and insurance).

Your 1861 New Orleans Mint silver half dollar will be sealed in its official NGC holder with certification attributing it as an authentic coin of the Confederate States of America from the SS *Republic* treasure.

It will be housed in a magnificent hardwood presentation case and accompanied by a *National Geographic* DVD about the amazing discovery of the SS *Republic*.

Hold Rare Civil War History in Your Hands for just $99. Call now to find out how you can receive the 1861 CSA silver half dollar from the SS *Republic* for just $99 down. Own it for one full month, *Risk-Free*. You must be 100% satisfied, or return it (insured and in its original packaging) with no further obligation. If you decide to keep it, your account will be billed in affordable monthly installments. Call now 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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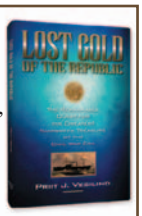

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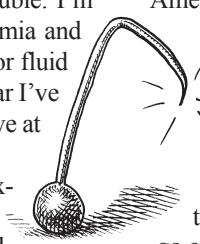
the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Flat Lights on The Ceiling

THEY say that any Emily Dickinson poem can be sung to the tune of "The Yellow Rose of Texas." I had my own adventures in transposing last week. When you go into the hospital at 71 it is only natural that a song extolling youth that came out when you were 18 should run through your head. Lying on my back in the CT Scan room, staring up at the hospital's big modern panels of recessed lighting, I discovered that you can sing "flat lights on the ceiling" to "Three Coins in the Fountain" without missing a beat.

I was on the cardiology floor, in for three days and four nights for the so-called "battery of tests." I was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, ventricle enlargement, and congestive heart trouble. I'm taking meds to control arrhythmia and clot formation, and a diuretic for fluid retention that really works; so far I've lost 27 pounds just from what we at NATIONAL REVIEW call p**ing.



Now I'm back home again, expecting the mail to turn up one of those instant surveys called "Tell Us About Your Hospital Experience." I'd love to . . .

Once upon a time, hospitals were universally acknowledged as singular institutions that were not expected to be anything else but what they were. Because of its singularity the hospital was described in reassuringly undemocratic terms as "a world unto itself," with "its own way of doing things," while its singular nurse—who woke patients up to give them their sleeping pills—was heralded in jokes and movies as one of the all-time great pioneers of rugged individualism.

But times have changed. Nowadays not even a mom-and-pop shop is comfortable with the idea of being a world unto itself, and people with their own way of doing things are packed off to management workshops to cure them of it. Above all, singularity is out. The goal of today's hospitals is *typicality*. Like every other institution in the country—insurance companies, banks, universities—they want to be what is known as a "microcosm of America."

Checking into a microcosm of America instead of a hospital is what made my "Hospital Experience" a hospital *experience*, as in "dining experience!" instead of a hospital *stay*, as in "She's resting comfortably."

Any institution wishing to be a microcosm of America must first have a huge workforce of females. This hospitals have, which gives them a second advantage: endless possibilities for confusion. The number of young American women named Pam and Debbi has reached critical mass, as have the number of American jobs in which surnames are never used. Pam and Debbi once were called "Nurse Smith" and "Nurse Jones," but nobody would dare call them that now because it sounds so cold and unfriendly, so when you need to tell one from the other you have to go out and play on the microcosm with them.

American microcosms celebrate the group, never the loner, and enshrine inclusiveness. Hence the wasteful duplication, repetition, and sheer exhaustion caused by our democratic compulsion to have too many cooks in the kitchen. Reciting the history of my swollen ankles to six different nurses was like making six different calls to Customer Service and never getting the same rep twice. In both cases, I had to tell the same story over and over from the beginning, which not only is guaranteed to produce discrepancies, but put me on the same intellectual level as the peasants in Charles Lamb's essay, who thought they had to burn down their barns every time they wanted cooked meat. Throw another microcosm on the barbie.

Nothing says American microcosm like distrust of the written word. Thinking to save time for all concerned, I wrote up my complete medical history but nobody connected with the hospital wanted to read it, and a couple of people seemed to think I was weird for writing it. They all wanted to hear me tell it "in your own words," as if written words were the work of some evil twin.

Because they distrusted my written words, I retaliated by distrusting their spoken ones. I decided they were probing, trying to find a pattern, a recurrence, making an illness out of something that wasn't. I found myself getting wary, then downright sneaky. "Don't tell them you get sleepy every afternoon, else they'll want to test you for narcolepsy," I warned myself. "For God's sake don't tell them how depressed you've been . . . And if they mention sex, say 'I had it once years ago but it went away and never came back.'"

I hadn't talked so much since my last book tour! I was talking myself to . . . death?

That's when I decided to draw up some emergency instructions in case I had a heart attack before I was discharged from Microcosms of America Memorial. I asked the nurse for some paper, and lo and behold, she delivered the coup de grâce.

"You can take it up to the Hospitality Center," she said. "They have volunteers there who can help you with the wording."

Now that Jack Kevorkian has been sprung from jail, the voluntary-euthanasia movement will get, shall we say, a second wind. I confess I am in favor of having a legalized suicide service just a phone call away, but what is more of a microcosm of America than the computerized menu? Can't you hear it? "Press one for hanging . . . press two for poison . . ."

Or imagine being put on hold and having to listen to euthanasia songs with lyrics by America's greatest poetess set to Dubya's favorite Texas tune.

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Im-mor-tal-iteee!

NR

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

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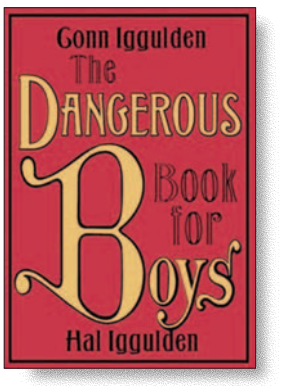
Boys Gotta Be Boys



The Dangerous Book for Boys, by Conn and Hal Iggulden (HarperCollins, 288 pp., $24.95)

MONA CHAREN

For decades this country has more or less tamely been taking instruction from the likes of Gloria Steinem, who advised that "we badly need to raise boys more like we raise girls." An entire generation of parents, weaned on feminist claptrap, dutifully set about cleansing males of their boyishness. As Christina Hoff Sommers documented in *The War Against Boys*, the feminists were able to bend the Department of Education as well as the National Education Association to their preposterous agenda. Competition was frowned upon; stories of adventure and derring-do were replaced by tales of care and compassion. Recess, a last redoubt for smothered boys to expend some of their energy, was abolished at some schools.

But of course, the idea that boys could be just like girls, if only we would abandon our silly prejudices and raise them identically, has run into a ditch. Even some of the feminists (the practical sort, not the theorists) who actually had children were astonished to discover that virtually straight out of the womb, little boy units and little girl units think and behave differently.

The American debut of Conn and Hal Iggulden's *The Dangerous Book for Boys* marks how far we have progressed from the feminist Dark Ages of a couple of decades ago. Here is an absolutely brilliant compendium of things that captivate the male of the species—and it is flying off the shelves.

Start with the title. Nowhere do the authors, who are brothers, explain why the word "dangerous" is included, but I suspect it's because they know the male mind. Any boy surveying titles on a shelf will be drawn to that word as a candidate is drawn to a microphone.

My 11-year-old son immediately set about making the "greatest paper airplane in the world" after opening to page 2. He certifies that the Iggulden model does surpass all previous efforts and we have one parked on the very top of a high bookcase to certify that it really flies well. It will require some advanced engineering to get the thing down.

In one- to four-page increments, *The Dangerous Book for Boys* provides instructions, drawings, narratives, and pictures on about 70 topics. Here boys can learn how to navigate at night by the stars, how to build a go-cart, what are the famous battles of history, how to teach your dog to play dead, how to make an electromagnet, the rules of English grammar, the phases of the moon, dinosaurs, five pen-and-paper games, baseball's most valuable players since 1931, how to make disappearing ink, the basics of first aid, and some things to know about girls. Every experiment—including how to make a periscope, how to grow crystals in a water glass, and how to make a timer and tripwire—was field-tested by the authors and usually requires only household objects, though some suburbanites like me might require multiple trips to the hardware store, as our supply of wood, small bulbs, and clothespins is not what it should be.

Like most moderns, we have our share of video games about the house and those clearly appeal to a part of the male psyche. Some are even educational. But what they fail to do and what this book does so well is nurture a boy's natural curiosity and desire to manipulate his environment. If you have a boy, were a boy, or even know a boy well, do you have any doubt that he would love to build a battery with "ten quarters, metal kitchen foil, blotting paper, two pieces of copper wire, cider vinegar, salt, an LED (light-emitting diode, available from hobby and hardware shops), and masking tape"? Do you doubt that he would be interested in learning the dots and dashes of Morse Code? Or that he would leap at the chance to make his own bow and arrows?

The *Dangerous Book for Boys* marks how far we have progressed from the feminist Dark Ages of a couple of decades ago.

The Iggulden brothers appreciate a boy's curiosity about nature, history, mechanical things, and magic tricks. But they also gratify a boy's longing for stories of courage, extraordinary deeds, and sacrifice. Here a child can find the stories of Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, two climbers who scaled the west face of Siula Grande in the Andes in 1985 and almost lost their lives. Simpson broke a bone. Here is an excerpt:

> The two men came to a cut in the ridge and Simpson started to climb down a face of sheer ice. He hammered in one of his ice axes and didn't like the sound it made. As he pulled one out to get a better contact, the other gave way without warning and he fell.
>
> He hit hard, his shinbone going through his knee and into the upper leg. As Yates climbed down, he [Simpson] tried to stand on it, appalled at the pain and grating of bones. The two men looked at each other in desperation. Simpson expected his friend to leave him. There was no other choice—a broken leg so far from civilization meant that he was dead.

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Yates did not leave him, but I won't spoil the story. You will also find here the life story of Douglas Bader, the flying ace who lost both of his legs in a 1931 accident but nonetheless served heroically in World War II.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

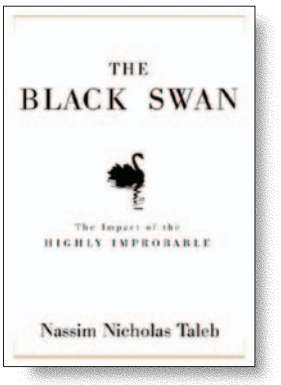
"Invictus" by William Ernest Henley is reproduced in full in the section titled "Seven Poems Every Boy Should Know," along with "The Road Not Taken," "If," and "Sea-Fever," among others. Yes, there's a whiff of the English gentleman about this entire compendium—despite the additions of the Declaration of Independence and the "Mountains of the United States." The famous battles are a bit skewed toward English history. The Somme, for example, is introduced this way: "The Somme was the river in France that Edward III had crossed just before the battle of Crécy. The area has had a great deal of British blood soaking into its earth over the centuries, but never more than on the first day of the battle of the Somme, July 1, 1916." This clearly came straight from the English version of the book, published last year. But that's no great fault.

A few minor quibbles: Some of the photographs and drawings have captions, others do not. The writing is not always crystal clear, and some of the explanations of large subjects (such as the earth's movement and the seasons) are a bit too brief.

Suggestion for the next edition: One subject that I have found to be of intense interest to boys is poisonous animals and plants. Whose venom is, ounce for ounce, the most deadly? (I've heard it's the black-widow spider, but the Igguldens can research the matter.) A section on this would be welcome, I suspect.

The Dangerous Book for Boys is a celebration of boys—their eagerness, their curiosity, their energy, and their purity of heart. It nurtures their spirits and elevates their spongy minds with proudly and unapologetically masculine topics. Good show. **NR**

The Axeman Cometh



The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable, by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (Random House, 366 pp., $26.95)

GEORGE GILDER

Nassim Nicholas Taleb is a libertarian (and a libertine), and in all likelihood he deems you a turkey. There he sits, in Paris or New York, in "a dilapidated but elegant café," as "unpolluted" as possible with "persons of commerce," watching you walk by. He sneers—but don't take offense: He views most of the passing world with disdain.

Maybe you are a banker, breasting a red tie and besotted with conservative beliefs. Taleb turns up his nose. Possibly you consider Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* a "refined" work of music. You have affronted some recherché Taleb affectation and are an aesthetic poseur. Possibly you find George Soros one of the few rich people who actually conform to Taleb's generalization about the wealthy—whom he regards as "inelegant, dull, pompous, greedy, unintellectual, selfish, and boring."

Perhaps, on a deeper level, you try to plan ahead, forgo gratifications, and save for the future, pursuing the good life of home, church, enterprise, and family. Maybe this traditional code makes it easy for you to ignore the fact that ultimately the universe is futile and random. In all cases, Taleb sees you as poultry personified.

Don't bridle, though, at Taleb's elegant scorn. He thinks turkeys have, for the most part, a good life. Pampered by attentive keepers, comfortable in their pens and sleek suits, preening over their red wattles or ties, coddled by hens and chicks, these happy gobblers feel complacent about the world . . . right up to the day before Thanksgiving. Then, like so many bankers facing an Asian financial crisis or beach owners hit by a tsunami, they meet what Taleb terms their "black swan"—the out-of-the-blue disaster that confounds all their seemingly reasonable expectations.

Taleb's key insight comes from the works of David Hume, and it's known as the inductive fallacy: No number of authoritative sightings of white swans can prove the absence of black swans. No succession of good days offers any viable evidence against a bad day in turkey-land tomorrow—a Thanksgiving axe, a 9/11, a Pearl Harbor, a tornado, a financial meltdown, a nuclear explosion, a meteor.

Six years ago, Taleb published an autobiographical book called *Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in the Markets*. This stylish and intriguing account of his reflections as a "no nonsense" trader of derivatives became a surprise bestseller. Now that "unexpected success" (actually predicted by me when I read it) has given birth to an ungainly child, one even more disdainfully Delphic and devoted to the same misleading ideas, titled *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. Vaulting onto the *New York Times* bestseller list, it has thrust Taleb onto the stage of the media as a U.-Mass. Dean's Professor in the Sciences of Uncertainty and a belletristic cosmopolitan thinker.

Much of his book is a catalogue of the errors of logic that afflict all us turkeys as we appraise risks and make investments. He points especially to *survivorship bias*. Survivorship distorts any phenomenon in which only the survivors are around to be analyzed and included in the data. Taleb compares these survivor effects with the impact of harsh conditions on their victims—whether gulag inmates said to have

Mr. Gilder is editor-in-chief of *Gilder Technology Report* and co-founder of the Discovery Institute. His most recent book, *The Silicon Eye*, was a finalist for the Royal Society's Aventis Prize for science.

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been "hardened" by the experience, or irradiated rats that are alleged to have become "superrats" as a result. These punishments do not "harden" their victims but merely select the hardest as survivors.

Writ cosmic, survivorship bias explains the *anthropic principle* in science, whereby the improbability of human life is attributed to the presumed existence of zillions of failed experiments or parallel universes that preceded the one whose success we now proudly enjoy and subject to indices of probability. Taleb invokes this survivorship principle to discredit the idea that improbability is evidence of Providence. To some imponderable degree, he attributes *all* outcomes to randomness and luck. He castigates us turkeys, who whistle blithely past "the cemeteries of silent evidence"—where are interred the non-surviving worlds or universes or whistling turkeys.

Other temptations for the turkey include the *narrative* fallacy, which leads us to ascribe cause and coherence to sequences of interesting or emotionally charged events. We tell stories and listen to them, as if they captured the deeper truths of life, when almost all the most savory anecdotes are too good to be true or too rare to be representative.

The narrative fallacy converges with the *ludic* fallacy: We turkeys are alleged to believe that the world is a game, played by the rules. The axeman will not come because it is against the law of the land or against the law of probabilities. Even casino owners believe this fable. But Taleb demurs, with a tale of a casino he visited and advised in Vegas, which turned out to have mastered all the possible threats from within the game: counting, cheating, or outwitting the house. But the threats all came from *beyond* the rules—an errant tiger that attacked its trainer (Roy, of Siegfried and Roy), a disgruntled builder who threatened to blow up the place, an IRS scam by an ingenious clerk. All these black swans came near to bringing down the house.

Taleb believes that all ventures and markets resemble this casino and that human beings persistently underestimate the likelihood and significance of black swans. Perhaps he should leave his café and survey the world. A perusal of the *New York Times* or any television news program—two sources of information that Taleb commendably shuns—shows a propensity to panic over global warming, avian flu, Iran, asbestos, nuclear power plants, North Korea, radon, DDT, and other possibly trumped-up perils. Best-seller lists regularly keen with tomes on the coming inflationary, deflationary, real-estate, global, or simply "great" depression.

In fact, everybody knows about black swans, and as Ken Fisher shows in his investment classic *The Only Three Questions That Count*, observers tend to exaggerate the impact of such catastrophes on the world economy. The virtual elimination of an American city by Katrina, for example, hardly moved the markets. Chernobyl was a non-event depicted as a disaster chiefly by opponents of nuclear power. The 1987 crash, much cited by Taleb as a black swan, was a trivial event (as I told the press the next day) and it was mostly corrected within six weeks. Humans are not turkeys and we take consciously calculated risks in full awareness of the possibility that they may not pan out. We know all too well that the world is full of axe-wielding madmen or drunken drivers or terrorists who may prevent us from enjoying our rewards.

Taleb extends his theory of stock picking (which is, briefly, that with a large enough cohort of pickers some poor pickers will become acclaimed as prophets through mere luck) to companies "that engage in volatile businesses." Together with survivor bias, volatility means some clinkers will seem to be stars. A cohort of 10,000 companies that engage in volatile businesses (with sharp boom-and-bust cycles) will eventually dwindle to 1,250 "stars"—all attributable to pure luck. Since real-world outcomes scarcely differ from the random pattern, he concludes that the results are random rather than planned. But such charts merely map out statistical patterns. Taleb believes that these statistical patterns show that the world is chaotic and unpredictable, that expertise is mostly delusional, and that anyone who argues to the contrary is a gull of the narrative or ludic fallacy, "fooled by randomness."

I believe, however, that the fool of randomness is Taleb. Virtually any sequence of data points, if extended far enough by a computer program, can be rendered a random wash or walk. But it is not randomness but real creativity and creation that matter to the world and to investors. Inventions such as the microchip or the laser or the antibiotic, entrepreneurial initiatives such as Google or Wal-Mart, the millions of small-business innovations that animate every community—these are the creative acts that enable human beings to survive and triumph. To judge the sources of a creative pattern, a chart of its ups and downs is nearly irrelevant.

The very nature of creativity is that it always comes as a surprise to us. If it didn't we could predict it and plan it and it would not be necessary; socialism would work! In a free economy, a high degree of evident randomness does not mean actual randomness. A random-like pattern is evidence not of purposelessness but of an entrepreneurial economy full of creative surprises. To understand a domain dominated by human action rather than by aleatory throws of chance events, the observer must use not an oscilloscope that measures frequencies on a chart but a microscope that examines the facts and details of particular creations.

Taleb's book is just another creative tome on the yellow-brick parking lot that seeks to seal off the universe from any entropic blemish of creation, whether divine or entrepreneurial, leaving only the author to perform his trivial tarantella before adoring crowds, who admire the grace of his argument and the elegance of his prose as he proves the futility of excellence and insight, elegance and grace.

What Taleb derides as the narrative fallacy, the ludic fallacy, the teleological temptation, or the prophetic impulse are the behavioral styles that make us human. They are the techniques we use as baselines by which we can identify the unusual or the innovative. They are the imaginative and creative faculties that allow us to surmount our surroundings of random jungle and desert and contrive civilizations that can afford to furnish elegant cafés and other comfortable settings for hedonic writers such as Nassim Taleb. They are the essential source of creative ventures like Nassim Taleb's flawed but fascinating books. **NR**

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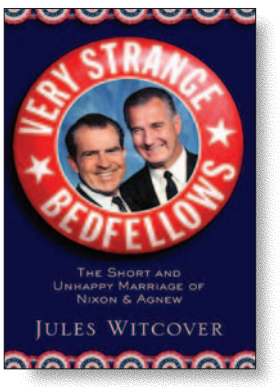
Not Made In Heaven



Very Strange Bedfellows: The Short and Unhappy Marriage of Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew, by Jules Witcover (PublicAffairs, 412 pp., $27.95)

MATTHEW SCULLY

Longtime NR readers will recall that in the early 1990s this magazine took up the cause of Spiro T. Agnew, who at the time had been denied his rightful place in the pantheon of vice-presidential busts in the U.S. Capitol. A few petty tyrants in the curator's office, along with surviving members of the "effete corps of impudent snobs" in the Washington media, had decided to stick it to the old fellow—one last kick to keep him in his place. With a series of stirring editorials, National Review put his tormentors to rout, and today, eleven years after Agnew's death, you will find no missing faces among those busts.

It turned out the statue meant a lot to our 39th vice president, as a mark of what he had achieved in life and what he had lost, and he was grateful. NR's example, as I recall, also inspired Maryland governor Parris Glendening to order his predecessor's official portrait removed from a broom closet in the State House and put in a proper place—and with that the work of our little Fairness for Agnew campaign appeared to be complete. But with this new book by Jules Witcover, an old *Washington Post* hand and one of the original tormentors, we must spring back into action to defend the man again, or at least his memory, from historical inaccuracy and gratuitous insult.

Very Strange Bedfellows is Witcover's 17th book, and his fourth just about the travails of the '68 ticket. To start with the author's good points (a favor he has never extended to Nixon or Agnew): Witcover does offer some fresh research, drawn from neglected reels of the Watergate tapes, that helps explain their "back-to-back political suicides." And he confines himself to actual events and conversations, sparing us the creative conjecture of his *Post* colleague Bob Woodward. Here and there he relies on a faulty memory (Nixon did not, for instance, first meet his speechwriter Pat Buchanan in St. Louis, and the vice-presidential residence was not donated by the Rockefellers). But these are the excusable errors of an accomplished senior reporter, and in general the book is a capable work of history—limited only by Witcover's thoroughly conventional opinions and inability to think twice about the facts before him.

As if there were not enough cautionary lessons in a straight telling of the Nixon-Agnew story, throughout the book the author labors to instruct us in the perils of that time when a "rabble-rousing divider" from Maryland dared to criticize the liberal establishment. "Not since Barry Goldwater's famous defense of 'extremism in defense of liberty,'" he writes (another of those minor errors—it was "in the defense of liberty"), "had a major political figure expressed such venom." It was a scary time, in which "an air of intimidation wafted through many newsrooms," and it's clear that Witcover has never quite gotten over the audacity of the man.

Agnew wasn't impressed by the self-importance of his critics, and spoke to them in a tone to which they were not accustomed—as in the case of the protesters of the era, who, he said, "take their tactics from Fidel Castro and their money from Daddy." He'd had his fill of "instant analysis and querulous criticism" from the media, as he explained in a nationally televised address in Montgomery:

> The day when the network commentators and even the gentlemen of the *New York Times* enjoyed a form of diplomatic immunity from comment and criticism of what they said—that day is gone. . . . When their criticism becomes excessive or unjust, we shall invite them down from their ivory towers to enjoy the rough and tumble of public debate. . . . The time for blind acceptance of their opinions is past. And the time for naïve belief in their neutrality is gone.

A fine motto, declared in 1969, for every conservative today with a blog, column, or TV or radio show. Like all of Agnew's rhetoric, it had an edge but also assumed the intelligence of his listeners, both conservative and liberal. A fair-minded author would give the man credit at least for bold and reasoned argument, but all Witcover has to offer is more whining about Agnew's "thinly veiled hate-mongering"—more of the same querulous criticism, even 38 years later.

"There was a time," Agnew observed (and I'm going to go out on a limb here and declare this one the work of Buchanan), "when the liberalism of the old elite was a venturesome and fighting philosophy—the vanguard political dogma of a Franklin Roosevelt, a Harry Truman, a John Kennedy. But you know and I know that the old firehorses are long gone. Today's breed of radical-liberal posturing in the Senate is as closely related to Harry Truman as a Chihuahua is to a timberwolf."

Dusting off such lines, Witcover thinks he is demonstrating what a nasty character Agnew was. But many readers, and especially those familiar only with the baby talk of political candidates nowadays, will be left filled with admiration for the unflinching, manful tone of the Agnew style. To appreciate Spiro Agnew when he was in form, one needed, at the very least, a sense of humor: not a strong point of "supercilious sophisticates."

It was Nixon himself who put the matter best: "You know why they're screaming at Agnew? Because he's hitting where it hurts." So one would think that these two men, who had hit it off so quickly in 1968, could have carried on as natural allies and friends. As the book explains, however, things began to unravel long before the troubles of 1973.

To give just a sample of Nixon's recorded conversations, it was the kind of atmosphere in which Bob Haldeman in 1972

Mr. Scully, the author of *Dominion*, is a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush.

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could refer to the vice president as "the son of a bitch," and nobody in the Oval Office thought such a remark out of line. And then there is endless discussion of Nixon's plan, long before the fall of 1973, to replace Agnew with John Connally. He wanted Big John lined up for the 1976 presidential nomination, fearing that not only Agnew but Ronald Reagan might get it instead. "Reagan, that just can't be," says Nixon. "You can't have a simplicity man in this position."

Nothing on the tapes is as calculating and phony as the indignation of Democrats during Watergate, but reading these transcripts one is struck again by their sheer idleness and stupidity. They make a strong case, too, for Agnew's belief that his own undoing and Nixon's were related events: "Too late President Nixon realized he had been suckered by his foes into going along with my ruination, ostensibly to save himself."

He gave a full accounting in a 1980 book that Witcover often quotes without ever actually rebutting, the upshot of which was this: The men who accused him of taking bribes were shady characters trying to escape their own troubles, and their testimony came at the promise of immunity. Agnew had never asked for money, a fact not disputed by his accusers, and the money he received as governor was used for political purposes, which was why a "net worth" investigation turned up no unusual surpluses. It was the way things were done in Maryland, a bad but not a criminal practice that nevertheless left him vulnerable to hostile prosecutors and to attorney general Elliot Richardson—who, as Agnew recalled, during Watergate "changed from a transparent toady to a sanctimonious lecturer on morals."

All these years later, one would expect a book on the subject to produce more evidence from court records, or fresh interviews with prosecutors and surviving accusers. But if such proof exists, Witcover doesn't share it, and to this day the only evidence anyone seems to have is that same narrative of the immunized accusers, who all escaped prison because of their cooperation. In a sample of how the method works, Witcover repeats the story that one of the accusers "had dropped by the vice president's new office in the basement of the White House and handed him an envelope containing ten thousand dollars in cash." Even now, he doesn't bother to explain that the vice president's offices have always been on the first floor of the West Wing and on the second floor of the Executive Office Building. A more inquisitive reporter—then and now—would have considered the possibility that this "basement" bribe story was false.

In the end, Agnew had the burden of a complicated story at a moment when no one had the time or inclination to be charitable. If Nixon "gave them a sword," Agnew had erected an entire gallows for himself. But it's a good rule in life to remember people for their best moments and not their worst. Spiro Agnew in his finest moments was a decent, loyal, and fearless man. And conservatives need never hesitate to call him one of their own. **NR**

ON HIS BROTHER

Having wandered amongst many peoples, sailed many seas,
I have come at last, dear brother, to these sad rites,
To offer what useless gifts are due the dead,
To speak a few words, my brother, to speechless ashes,
Your fate not to hear them, to be unable to answer,
As mine to suffer the cruelty of losing a brother.
But for now accept these offerings, these sacrifices,
By ancient custom handed down by the fathers,
Accept them damp with the many tears of your brother,
And now, and forever, my brother, forever—farewell.

—ROBERT MEZEY
after Catullus

■ TELEVISION ■

Family Ties

PETER SUDERMAN

Who lives, who dies, and who gets pinched? As *The Sopranos* drew its final breaths this season, questions like these attracted the most interest from press and fans. But with a show so resistant to tidiness, such questions miss the point. Series creator David Chase has always eschewed easy answers, and he has devoted much of his show to teaching—or forcing—viewers to live without them. But equally important, and mostly overlooked, is that the show was never really interested in typical mob-story questions; for all its tracksuits and sausage cookouts, murders and union scams, *The Sopranos* has displayed only a grudging willingness to deal with the tropes of the gangster picture. Instead, it has used the genre's hooks to ensnare its viewers into a milieu altogether both more harrowing and more familiar—the life of the modern, upper-middle-class family.

Just look at them: a mom and a dad, a son and a daughter, a big house with a yard and a pool, even a cranky uncle—as a domestic unit, the Sopranos are nothing if not the prototypical TV family, which is to say the prototypical American family. From the Cleavers to the Huxtables, America has long looked to television to set the standard for life at home. And in the Soprano family, as in so many TV families past, Dad still goes to the office, Mom still stays home, and the kids still bicker in the back seat of the car and have trouble with their homework. Tony, Carmela, Meadow, and A.J. drive SUVs, watch big-screen TVs, fret about college, and host poolside cookouts. They're a textbook update on the nuclear family comfortably ensconced in the green grasses of a suburban cul-de-sac.

But gone are the days of clean living and hard work, now replaced by a bottomless supply of narcissism and violence, petty arguments, crude behavior, and vicious consumerism: a never-ending drive for a bigger house, a newer car, a

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fancier television. There's no use denying the show's crime-story impulses entirely; but, as often as not, *The Sopranos* has been a cruel and bitter take on the vulgarity of suburbia set amidst the ruins of the American family.

From its opening credits, which depict Tony Soprano's drive out of New York, through its Jersey outskirts, and up to the driveway of his palatial suburban dwelling, the show brings viewers out of the world of urban crime and into the home. Throughout, the show's surface is domesticity; the aesthetic here is more Pottery Barn faux-simplicity than Corleone opulence. For a number of seasons, Tony conducted his business conversations in the family basement, surrounded by the accumulated junk—washing machines, cleaning supplies, barely used exercise equipment—that litters the storage spaces of so many American homes. Like that junk, his dirty dealings are stuffed away in the basement, leaving the upstairs and yard of the Soprano household to seem simply *nice*, in an understated, neutral-toned, golf-course-community sort of way.

Even when dealing with matters of life and death, the show never strays far from familial concerns. Season Two opens with Pussy Bonpensiero, a fellow mobster whom Tony (rightly) suspects of having given information to the authorities, heatedly defending his innocence. It's potentially a life-or-death conversation, yet it's staged against the same backdrop one might expect for talk of an upcoming pool party or golf game. It starts in Tony's driveway as he's picking up the morning paper, then moves to the basement, where his wife, Carmela, continually interrupts with calls down the stairs asking Tony to fetch laundry and bottled water. Their conversation ends on Tony's living-room couch, with Carmela and the kids eating breakfast in the background while the two mobsters sip coffee from pastel-striped mugs. Tony conducts the entire business wearing his bathrobe. It's *Goodfellas* by way of Martha Stewart; even when things are at their most dire, these two men, both lifelong thieves and murderers, cannot escape the trappings of suburbia.

After all, what is Tony but the typical harried father and husband—head of The Family, but also head of *his* family? As dad, he shuttles his daughter around to tour the Northeast's colleges (stopping along the way to off a rival). When his son falls into depression after a rough breakup, he sends him out to have a good time with other young men (at a strip-club party hosted by up-and-coming gangsters). Tony even helps his wife get her start in the real-estate business (by aggressively leaning on city building inspectors). He's balding; he's overweight; he likes sports, beer, and steak. He's an old-fashioned, lovable schlub, who just happens to kill when it suits him and run a major crime syndicate.

It's *Goodfellas* by way of Martha Stewart; even when things are at their most dire, these two murderers cannot escape the trappings of suburbia.

But never mind the murders and the hijackings. Tony's job is just a job. Like any manager, he hires and fires, manages cash flow, and arranges deals with other organizations. He's a Boss, sure, but he's also just a boss, a son who followed in his father's footsteps and, like so many in his generation, outearned his parents to step into the upper-middle class. Make no mistake, Tony is a baby-boomer through and through: He's got unresolved issues with his mom, sees a shrink, and fights with his wife over kids, work, and money. For anyone over 40, it all sounds awfully familiar.

Indeed, the entire Soprano family is crafted from the mold of the boomer family at its most self-indulgent. There is Carmela, the petty, pretty ditz whose concern over Tony's line of work is bought off with diamonds and beach houses. She long ago gave up questioning Tony's moral character, choosing instead to worry only about whether there will be enough cash left for her if he gets sent to prison. Daughter Meadow may be an honor student with a bright (or at least lucrative) future, but she's also a melodramatic narcissist and an expert manipulator who plays her parents into spoiling her at every opportunity.

What even needs to be said about A.J., the youngest, a pathetic, spiteful, juvenile miscreant with neither ambition nor sense? He's his father, but without the toughness or the misdirected work ethic, and the first few episodes of this season made quite clear that, despite a newfound predilection for thuggery, he's too weak and emotionally fragile to continue in his dad's line of work. The entire clan exhibits a surplus of oafish entitlement, unwilling to work for anything or anyone but themselves and resentful that they must do even that. Alexander Pope wrote that "a family is but too often a commonwealth of malignants." Nowhere is this more true than on *The Sopranos*.

That hasn't always been clear. Yes, Tony was a thug from the beginning, but he appeared to have a gentle side. Carmela once fretted over Tony's lifestyle, Meadow was a sweet young girl, and A.J. was little more than an adorably chubby adolescent troublemaker. But time has passed—eight years now since the show's debut—and the family's narcissism has calcified. Their chipper domestic façade has crumbled before our eyes, revealing the full extent of the brutishness, the crassness, the selfish nihilism that drives these four lost souls. The show's creators have not been kind to their quirky TV family, nor to the ideal it represents. They have piled on the sins and indulgences, stripped away the pretense of manners and civility, and left only the ugly, unsatisfied remains.

In its final season, especially, the show's creators have let slip the all-encompassing depravity that was initially somewhat obscured, forcing viewers to face up to the suburban decay that was their true subject all along. Despite its reputation, *The Sopranos* was never just a gruesome thriller about the hard-living, dim-witted thugs and swindlers of mafia legend; it was a morality play about the toll that decadence and selfishness take on families.

Time, fate, and the gods of television have been cruel to this fictional family. Yet Sunday after Sunday, we have reveled in their downfall, watching as they splintered under the pressures of modern life. Their real-life counterparts are not so forsaken; America's families—unlike Tony, Carmela, Meadow, and A.J.—still have a chance. The show is just now coming to an end, but for the Soprano family, it was all over long ago. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

Don't Knock It

ROSS DOUTHAT

Two years ago, Judd Apatow made a sly, subversive little foray into gross-out comedy called *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, which took a plot as old as *Porky's* (a desperate virgin trying to get laid with the help of his horndog friends) and added some twists: The virgin was a middle-aged guy with too much chest hair, a job at a big-box electronics store, and a collection of mint-condition action figures lining the shelves of his immaculate bachelor pad; the girl who finally made a man of him was a divorced mother of three (and grandmother of one); and their first night of passion also happened to be their wedding night. The movie grossed a couple hundred million dollars and made a star out of Steve Carell, who played the innocent of the title; it also announced Apatow's arrival as the Scorsese of a heretofore nonexistent subgenre, the socially conservative raunchfest.

To be fair, there has always been a strain of social conservatism running through the Great American Sex Comedy, which for all its aspirations to shock the bourgeoisie and titillate their teenage kids tends to find its way back to safer ground, with true love triumphing over caddishness and casual sex almost every time. But *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* offered something far more radical: a hilarious, profane, and realistic portrayal of the contemporary sexual landscape, with Carell's Andy Stitzer as a Don Quixote for a promiscuous age, a chivalrous dork adrift in a world of childish men and disappointed women, who discovers that sometimes the nice guy *can* get the girl, if he's brave enough to chase her and doesn't mind that she's a grandma. (Which not many men would mind, I'd venture, so long as the grandma in question looked like Catherine Keener.)

Now Apatow is back with *Knocked Up*, another dork-gets-the-girl sex comedy, and another film that ought to be required viewing for anyone at, say, the Family Research Council who wants to know how to reach out to "the kids." This time the dork in question isn't a tightly wound virgin; he's a laid-back, overweight slacker, played by the laid-back, overweight, and relentlessly charming Seth Rogen, who's about to make the leap from "he's funny, where have I seen him before?" to bona fide movie star. Rogen's Ben lives off the settlement from a lawsuit and spends most of his time hanging out with his even-less-presentable friends, getting high and trying to gin up a website that tells you exactly when nude scenes show up in well-known movies. He's a proud inhabitant of the long post-college adolescence that beckons to so many men these days; *their* biological clocks aren't ticking, after all, so why bother going through the hassle of growing up?

Particularly when the other gender, as embodied by Katherine Heigl's Alison, a fast-rising producer for the E! entertainment-news channel, seems happy to pick up the workplace slack. Alison is too busy with her career to even bother with a personal life—or at least that's the only plausible explanation of why someone so successful rents out the poolhouse from her sister Debbie (the gaunt, fabulous Leslie Mann, Apatow's wife) and Debbie's husband Pete, played by Paul Rudd as an adultescent who's transitioned to just-plain adulthood (which includes two adorable moppets, played by Apatow and Mann's children) and seems to be regretting it.

Knocked Up is exactly the sort of social conservatism we need.

The action kicks off with Alison hitting a local nightclub, Debbie in tow, to celebrate her promotion to an on-air role on E! Debbie goes home after an hour to check on the kids; Alison stays, and ends up drunk enough to have a one-night stand with the can't-believe-his-luck Ben, who gasps "you're prettier than I am" before they hit the sheets, and then interprets her "just do it already" while he's fumbling with the condom to mean that she's as careful about her birth-control pills as she is about her career. Fortunately for the movie, she isn't, and the next time they see each other Alison finds herself informing Ben that he's eight months away from fatherhood.

In one sense, the romance that follows is all kinds of implausible. I would hazard, for instance, that your typical anchor for E! would be at least somewhat more favorably disposed to what one of Ben's friends calls the "rhymes with smash-mortion" option, even if its advocates were as unpleasant as *Knocked Up*'s script makes them out to be. (Alison's mother makes a brief, odious, all-too-plausible appearance in which she urges her daughter to dispose of the pregnancy so that she can have "a real baby" when her career permits.) Even once the decision is made to keep the child, Alison and Ben's happily-ever-after often seems a bit more like an act of charity on her part than a relationship of anything approaching equals.

Yet the implausibilities are what make the film so delightfully subversive. Forget what pop sociology would suggest: Why *shouldn't* a young woman, however successful and seemingly secular she may be, find abortion too abhorrent even to consider? And why *shouldn't* the fact that a loserish young man happens to be the father lead her to overlook his obvious flaws as spousal material, even as impending parenthood convinces him to drop the bong, ditch the porn, and generally grow into the man he was always capable of being, but never had any reason to become?

Like *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* before it, *Knocked Up* exists at an angle to American life, but not a particularly sharp one. It partakes of a cold-eyed realism about everything from the difficulties of marriage to the mechanics of pregnancy and childbearing (there's a scene of the baby's head crowning that will inspire shocked gasps in any theater you care to visit), and if Apatow's plot devices—a middle-aged virgin gets the girl; a mismatched couple makes it work for the sake of their unborn kid—seem unbelievable, well, then maybe the joke's on us. In an era when your friends want to get rich off porn and your mother tells you to get an abortion, this is exactly the sort of social conservatism we need: not a jeremiad against cultural rot or a gooey ode to idealized family values, but a clear-eyed, hopeful, and hilarious celebration of doing the right thing. NR

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■ COUNTRY LIFE ■

Going to Seed

RICHARD BROOKHISER

Silver Heights Farm, an organic nursery in the next county, sells its garden plants in Cochecton Corners, Callicoon, and New York City (places with a combined population of over eight million). June has come, the last possible frosts have gone, and it is time to go shopping, which means it is time first to mark up the Silver Heights Farm catalogue.

They can write ad copy for my books any time they like. It helps that they have unusual products, many of them heirlooms—old varieties superseded by the requirements (regularity, sturdiness) of mass marketing—and a lover's devotion to them. What's to love about garden plants? Start with the names. Some are named for us. Box Car Willie is a tomato ("smooth, red 6–12 oz.") named after the hobo country singer. Jenny Lind is a melon ("brownish orange-green, heavily netted, mottled with slight ribs") that commemorates the Swedish Nightingale. Queen Anne and the 7th Earl of Edgecombe make their appearances, the queen for a melon so sweet-smelling that ladies carried it in the pockets of their dresses ("but don't bother to eat it"); the earl for a tomato ("sweet and tangy") whose seeds he brought back from a stint of sheep farming in New Zealand. The Paul Robeson tomato has "dusky dark red skin" and "dusky dark green shoulders," which the wit of the alphabet puts next to the Peron Sprayless, an Argentinian variety ("SOOOOO easy to grow"). Humanity commemorates talent, toffs, and the authoritarian personality, while nature goes about her business.

Heirlooms come with histories, like characters in a tale by Sir Walter Scott. One particular pink beefsteak tomato (a "good slicer and canner") is called 1884; it was grown from seed found in debris left by the flood of the same year in Friendly, W.Va. The Mountain State contributed another beefsteak, the Mortgage Lifter, "developed by Radiator Charlie (Mr. M. C. Byles) . . . in the 1930s. After 6 years of breeding, using the 4 best varieties he could find . . . Radiator Charlie, who had a radiator repair business at the foot of a steep hill, finally created a stable, improved seedling. He sold plants for $1.00 . . . and paid off the $6000 mortgage on his house." Myona tomatoes are "excellent" for paste. A seed collector "got this one from an Italian market gardener. When he went back to find out what variety this super, red fruit was, the gentleman replied: 'It's-a-my-own-a.'"

They come from the four corners of the world. Slaves brought the West India Burr Gherkin to Jamaica, and Minton Collins of Richmond brought it to the United States in 1793. The Glory of Enkhuisen cabbage was "introduced in 1899 by Sluis & Groot in Enkhuizen, Holland," though it came to the United States from Poland, hence its second name, Slava z Enkhuisen. Gobbo di Nizza, or Hunchback of Nice, is a cardoon, an artichoke-relative (do they call it something else in Nice, I wonder?). Long Island Improved (Brussels sprouts), Purple of Sicily (cauliflower), Ukrainian Beauty (eggplant), Bulgarian Giant (leeks), Cajun Jewel (okra), Cheyenne Bush Pumpkin, Turkey Rhubarb (which is from China). We hang jokes and moods on them. The Zatta melon is known in Italy as Brutto ma Buono—ugly but good. Thomas Jefferson noted it in 1774. What would he have called Aaron Burr, if Burr had been a garden plant? Maybe Satan's Kiss, a pepper: "very hot, round, about the size of a golf ball. Traditionally stuffed with mozzarella and anchovies, then grilled." Moon & Stars is a watermelon, so-called because its "dark green skin is speckled with bright yellow splashes of larger moons and smaller stars." Mule Team is a tomato workhorse. "Plants are vigorous, disease resistant, and keep on bearing huge crops until frost."

So we made the drive to Cochecton Center, out, out, practically in Pennsylvania. The grass wore its first unmowed, unbaked green. The Center is a crossroads with a general store. There are more people in the cemetery. The living will arrive soon enough—the fields sprouted realtors' signs, hawking 50- and 80-acre parcels, as the farms spin away into the past. Two greenhouses sit on one corner of a field, next to a five-storey cinderblock barn, shut tight (the catalogue warns "no land lines and no cell service. . . . We are in the 'boonies'"). Field birds skimmed for bugs; list in hand, we made our picks.

The plants were lined up on long tables in two-inch-high plastic pots. We could find the same selection, more or less, when the growers come to the Union Square Farmers' Market, two blocks from my apartment building, but by driving to the boonies we pay less. And the cost of the gas? Cochecton Center, like Ithaca, gave us a beautiful journey. But it gave us more than Ithaca, for we left with our plants, two flats full, none more than a hand high.

Now came the planting. We are guided by good advice, and by the seat of our pants. I certainly never turned a shovel of dirt willingly all my youth (my present habits astonish my father). Our garden is like Manhattan. It is built up, in raised beds; it is enriched with compost; we plant only the best breeds; and we lay them in close together, replanting as the cool-weather species of spring give way to the hardened campaigners of summer. High rise, high quality, high density.

Also high competition. Everyone looks neat and orderly now. The tomato cages, inverted conical metal frames, loom far above their tenants. But when the growing begins, watch out. Leaves and fronds become profuse, then rank. The tomato worms move in to feed, and the wasps lay their eggs in the backs of the worms. The cages have to be bolstered with blown-down tree branches, lashed together in teepees: outsider art. If you filmed it and sped it up, it would look like the Three Stooges, gouging and struggling. They have to; they only have three months. **NR**

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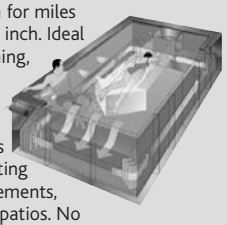

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Great Lives

NEW YORK, MAY 22

I RETURN from one week's leave from my column, grateful for my old roost and in the mood to repay a favor by granting one, or attempting to do so. You must have the narrative of what happened one day last week.

I was at work, with an assistant, on a long project, a book about the Goldwater campaign and the events leading up to it. At noon I had an e-mail from my oldest friend, a historian-belletrist, a knighted Englishman, whose message was that I must interrupt whatever I was wasting time on in order to catch a particular movie. The title he gave me was *The Lives of Others*. My companion hadn't heard of it either. Still, so urgent was my friend's recommendation that we instructed Google to advise us where we could find it.

We were given one theater 15 miles east of my study, at an odd hour of the evening. But west about the same distance was a matinee at 4:15. So we threw duty to the winds and arrived at the theater in Mamaroneck, New York, which like most modern theaters husbands five different movies, requiring you to specify which it is you are there to see.

We were ushered into a dark chamber entirely empty. The ticket seller told us that if we had arrived two minutes later, the theater would have been shut. "If there's no one here, we don't show the film."

Two hours and twenty minutes later we came away. The house was still empty. I turned to my companion and said, "I think that is the best movie I ever saw." He is only 23 years old, but he nodded his agreement.

The movie is German, and in German. There is a prejudice, perhaps understandable, against going to see a movie made in a foreign language. But good subtitle writers capture your mind and heart early in the engagement, and after ten minutes you are as if tuned in to your native language. This is so of this German film, which depicts life in Berlin in 1984 under the famous Stasi, who were ten times as numerous as their brother Gestapo had been.

The watchword of the Stasi was information. They would use all their powers, which were plenary, to press their totalitarian thumb down on any expression of life in East Germany. In this case, they had their eye on a playwright who sought to write about the way he and his fellow East Germans lived. To effect their surveillance the Stasi used the most rudimentary tool of social highwaymanry, the listening device. The writer is away from his lair for a day, and no fewer than eight technicians swoop down on his apartment, from which moment there is not a private swallow in the life of the author and his lady and his friends.

Omnipresent in the film is the Stasi officer who is listening to it all, turning the device over to a coadjutor every eight hours, together with notes about the conversations he has overheard during his watch. And then, and then, there is a trickle of humanity, which quickly turns the drama into three parts, Stasi vs. German humankind vs. Stasi. The tension mounts to heart-stopping pitch and I felt the impulse to rush out into the street and drag passersby in to watch the story unfold.

The principal players are captivating, especially the main Stasi officer, who, without a change in aspect of his dour countenance, undergoes this convulsion of the soul, which permits the author life, though without his martyred lady. There is then the sublime vengeance of a published book's dedication to the redemptive German functionary who briefly interrupted hell in East Germany, pending, finally, the eradication of the terrible Berlin Wall.

I looked at the record and was gratified to find, in the critics' files, encomiums absolutely unconfined in their admiration of this movie, which in fact won the Academy Award for Best Foreign-Language Film. And I was unsurprised to find that what seems the whole of East Germany is riven by its impact. Since so many East Germans were complicit in the postwar reign of the German Democratic Republic, there is a corporate national shame at the betrayal of life, as so brazenly done by so many millions, but whose country, at least, has given the world this holy vessel of expiation.

Immigration Blues

NEW YORK, MAY 24

THE immigration bill is a mess, but how could it be otherwise? Messes are a part of democratic rule.

There are several interests here seeking to be served simultaneously. There is (1) the existing illegal population of between 10 million and 12 million; (2) the labor needs of U.S. businesses; (3) the public sense of justice scorned and the public desire that some effort be made to rectify past neglect; (4) the anxiety to understand the political meaning of the bill, a creature given discordant life by a Hatfield and a McCoy. Legislators want to know whether the enduring fingerprint of the proposed measure will be that of Sen. Jon Kyl, or that of Sen. Ted Kennedy.

Naked interests are nakedly present. Somewhere between 5 million and 10 million jobs are currently given to men and women willing to do work for which there is no felt calling in the legal labor market.

This is at the crux of a critical question. What should be the reaction of American workers? It was supposed, at the planning stage, that labor-union leaders would approve the amendments, but what has happened is that no one can answer authoritatively the question whether the licensing of the illegals jeopardizes the job security of native workers.

One consideration here is that we are at what is loosely speaking called full employment. The current unemployment rate of 4.5 percent suggests a labor market efficiently at work. But a spokesman for the AFL-CIO insists that the integration of several million workers into the legal market would have the effect of lowering the living standards of American workers.

Critics of the existing arrangements,

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which are simply latitudinarian—there are laws respecting immigration, and people do not abide by them, so what?—are telling us that the effect of laws not abided by is a distortion of the labor market. If the farmer isn't finding applicants for his apple-picking at $3 per hour, let him try offering $5 per hour.

But a producer always seeks to lower costs; that is his primary role in the market equation. So our farmer has simply continued to use illegal workers. Now he is faced with the legalization of the same people he was getting for $3, and contemplates the prospect of having to pay the minimum wage of more than $5.

The late Robert Bartley, the visionary apostle of the market, preached against efforts to override the market. His doctrine would have eliminated any immigration laws, his faith in the market being such as to ordain its findings as transcending political considerations.

But realism does not always yield to economic dictation. It is one thing for the analyst to rule that the simple way to adjudicate the discrepancy between unemployment in Mexico and high employment in the United States is to let Mexicans move north until equilibrium sets in. But that overview simply denies basic cultural propositions. Societies are different, and they cannot solve every problem by merging.

The immigration bill stabs at these truths, but satisfies none completely. Sen. Dick Durbin put it arrestingly. "This bill is drawing opposition from business, labor, Democrats, Republicans, theists and non-theists, American League and National League baseball fans. What I'm trying to say to you is there's more opposition to this bill than support [for it]."

The gnawing point for skeptics is the matter of realizing immigration laws. The current measure speaks of additional fencing to bolster leaky barriers of past decades. But skeptics are entitled to wonder just when the dividing barriers would be made effective enough to freeze the flow of immigrants at the desired level.

Our lawmakers should understand the public skepticism. Theirs has been the responsibility in default. If Congress had begun reforms by stabilizing the Mexican border, it might more credibly have gone on to elaborate residually desirable changes in the mess Congress has permitted.

Honor, Duty, Country?

NEW YORK, JUNE 1

While it is true that no historical event exactly replicates another, it is certainly the case that what happened in Vietnam in 1972–1975 bears very closely on the current situation in Iraq.

To truncate the story drastically, what happened back then was the result of the correlation of four strategic factors.

1) Hanoi's resolution to conquer the south. The North Vietnamese were held back by the failure of their spring offensive in 1972. That offensive was weakened by U.S. mining of the harbors and by the reluctance of China, in the swoon of the Nixon visit to Mao, to give full-bodied support to an invasion. But Hanoi simply bided its time. 2) The withdrawal by the United States, ending in March 1973, of a combative military presence. Only a few hundred U.S. advisers were left in South Vietnam. 3) The growing stability of the South Vietnamese government, which was assumed competent to carry out the terms of the Paris agreements of 1973. These agreements had been negotiated in dozens and dozens of meetings between Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger. The agreements called for the removal of U.S. forces, the cessation of North Vietnamese offensives, and recognition of the Saigon government as the ruling political entity in the south. And 4) the progressive disunity of the United States government. Here we had the anti-war movement as a continuing force. But that movement attained dominance *pari passu* with the weakening of President Nixon. As Watergate metastasized from a "second-rate burglary" into grounds for the removal of a president, U.S. support for success in Vietnam wilted.

The parallels in the current situation are plain, beginning with the nature of the United States' participation. What we have right now is a progressively immobilized executive and a dissenting legislature, leading—inevitably—to an impotent military.

The question immediately posed is: Do we feel responsibility for what happens in the period ahead? The Iraqi government resembles the government of South Vietnam in 1973–4 in that Baghdad is fighting, as Saigon fought, for a political system free of overweening foreign elements. But Saigon could not hold out in the long run without U.S. military support, and neither can Baghdad.

If the parallels hold, i.e., if the result of failure in the Middle East is equivalent to the result of failure in Indochina, then we would expect to see the collapse of the Maliki government in Baghdad, some kind of bloody vengeance against Iraqis who had supported that government, and a people subjugated by a regime that sits on one percent of the world's supply of oil and is unlikely to proceed indifferent to the march, by Iraq's eastern neighbor, to becoming a nuclear power.

In the currency of human deaths, it is unlikely that we would match in Iraq what we stood by for in Vietnam. The statistics aren't even there, to count accurately the casualties of defeat in that theater. But the most graphic symbol is the picture of Vietnamese, young and old, clinging to a U.S. helicopter in the desperate, final hope to be taken away from those waiting to torture and kill them. As stated, the statistics are not final, but somewhere between a quarter million and two or even three million Vietnamese suffered from our flight from the burden we first had undertaken, and then abandoned.

Dr. Kissinger has said that the use of the American fleet to contain the invasion of 1975 could have saved the day. What could save the day in Iraq? Nothing short of public revulsion channeled toward those Democrats who are measuring these days the political value of honor. In the election ahead, all the world will be looking over our shoulders, including the ghosts of Vietnam.

—Universal Press Syndicate

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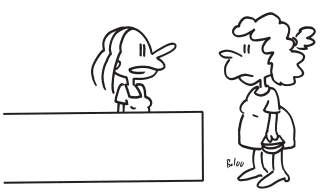

"I'm not supposed to say this, but I think you'd be better off with a cat."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

American Quagmire

I TRY to keep my distance from the idea that the personal is political. But recently I've been flying around America a lot. And sitting idly hour after hour at Gate Q83, watching that ghastly CNN airport channel, I find myself struggling to fight off the notion that this country's neo-Soviet transportation system (whoops, there I go) is the top eighth of the iceberg of national sclerosis (if icebergs can be sclerotic, or scleroses can be icy, or whatever).

On the Friday before Memorial Day at O'Hare, the federal holiday apparently took the federal transportation agency entirely by surprise. One of the electronic scanners was manned, the others were stilled: No sneakers, no Crocs, no stilettos anticipating a weekend of holiday pleasure passed through their tunnel of delights. This Memorial Day thing evidently came out of nowhere, or surely someone somewhere would have sent out a memo?

A week later at a small airport in New Hampshire: The plane was delayed an hour. When it arrived, it was delayed another hour, due to mechanical malfunction. When the problem was fixed, we were delayed another half-hour, due to the TSA guy not being around. He'd thought the mechanical malfunction would take longer to fix so he'd gone down to town to get a cheeseburger.

When he returned and we shuffled through security and got up into the air, the pilot announced that the mechanical malfunction had returned and we'd have to make an emergency landing in Albany. So I sat in Albany "International" (ha! where to? Winnipeg?) Airport reading Margery Eagan's column in the *Boston Herald* about Republican breasts. Insofar as I understand it, Democrat breasts are fine: The respective spouses of Obama, Biden, et al. keep them all tucked up and out of sight. But Fred Thompson's missus is going around showing off a deeper cleavage than that which divides this great republic after eight years of Bush-Cheney fearmongering, and Ms. Eagan didn't care for it. Nor for Mrs. McCain's embonpoint or Mrs. Giuliani's décolletage.

"The cleavage-industrial complex, obviously, has arrived," pronounced the columnist. "Why are these women doing this? What, exactly, is the message they're sending?"

I like to think Mrs. Thompson is sending me the message that she knows I'm stuck in the rain at Albany "International" Airport waiting for a flight that will never take off and she's doing her best to keep

One of the First-Ladies-in-waiting: Jeri Thompson

my spirits from flagging. But to be honest, I found myself thinking: Why is Margery Eagan doing this? What, exactly, is the message she's sending? That at a time of war abroad and great questions at home, there's nothing more pressing than Republican cleavage to write about? And then I thought: Why am I even sitting here in Albany reading this? What, exactly, is the message US Airways is sending?

Domestic "first" class is worse than coach in the Seventies. I add up all the hours I've spent at the gate in the last three months and I realize I could have taken violin lessons and been playing in the Berlin Philharmonic by now. When I first came to America on my own, as a teenager, I thought the airports were the height of supersonic cool. Now the planes are dingy and decrepit. Have you had that exchange where the stewardess asks you to bring your seat to its full upright position and you say unfortunately the button's not working and you're trying not to lean on it because every time you do it falls straight back on the guy behind you and she looks at you as if it's your fault?

When those Guyanans and Trinidadians were interrupted in their plot to blow up JFK, they understood something very basic: that the transportation network is one of the most potent symbols of national health. If freedom of movement is a basic right, then the ease with which one can move around says something about the health of the nation. (Britain's choked roads are instructive in this regard.) But we seem to have accepted the idea that the seized-up air-traffic system is some kind of unrepresentative outlier of no broader significance.

National Journal had one of those big cover stories the other week that's designed to get everyone buzzing around the big question, Is America over? Nobody did get buzzing about it, because it was mostly a lame roundup of the usual experts—Fukuyama, Brzezinski, Scowcroft—bemoaning the passing of their own heyday.

National decline is always inconceivable because the illusion of permanence is so strong: It would have seemed incredible to any five-year-old English boy watching Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee parade that he would be passing his twilight years in a strike-ridden basketcase shorn of empire and reduced to begging from the IMF.

But it seems to me that the state of the air-travel network is symbolic of something. So is America's decision to surrender to the illegal immigrants—to say that the undocumented insurgents have ensnared us in a quagmire in which victory is not an option. In different ways, both are revealing of structural decay. Not yet fatal, but decay nonetheless.

On the other hand, if I turned up at O'Hare and breezed through and the flight took off on time and it wasn't the Asian chicken salad for the fourteenth week in a row, I might be a whole lot more optimistic.

What are the chances of that? **NR**

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